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MUSIC AND THE COMPANION ARTS OF THE GOTHIC ERA

by

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The purpose of this study is to provide the teacher of the secondary school general music class with a body of information concerning the cultural activity of the Gothic period. Although this material is intended for presentation in a music class, the music is viewed in relation to the other Medieval arts rather than as a separate entity.

Chapter I presents a general introduction to the following forces that shaped the environment of the Gothic artist: the all-pervading influence of the Church as both a theological and a political institution, the major philosophical theories of the period, the effect of the crusades, the social implications of the chivalric code, the location and function of major cities and cultural centers, and the nature and extent of education in the Middle Ages.

Chapter II deals with the visual and literary art forms of the Medieval era: cathedrals, sculpture, stained glass windows, drama, painting, and literature. In all of the arts may be seen a gradual evolution of the humanistic tendency that was to reach its culmination in the Renaissance.

Chapter III is devoted to the development of both sacred and secular music in the Middle Ages: the musical as well as the social aspects of the troubadour's art, early secular polyphony, plainsong and its notation, an explanation of the Mass, sacred polyphony from early organum through Machaut's Notre Dame Mass, and musical instruments of the Gothic era.

Chapter IV contains general suggestions for the presentation of the preceding material in an actual classroom situation.



Throughout the thesis copious use is made of illustrative material including plates of representative examples of painting, sculpture, architecture, and musical instruments of the Gothic era. Musical examples revealing typical techniques and formal devices of the period are included throughout Chapter III.



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PAGE FROM METZ PONTIFICAL: ILLUMINATION OF A CHURCH DEDICATION  
 FITZ-WILLIAM MUSEUM, CAMBRIDGE

MANUSCRIPT. FRENCH GOTHIC. 1302—1316

## PREFACE

In recent years music educators have become increasingly concerned over the startling lack of music courses in the secondary school for the non-performing student. A large number of our nation's high schools have well-organized vocal and instrumental programs but offer little or nothing for the student who does not sing or play an instrument.

The recent emphasis on general music in the junior high school represents one attempt to offer to the child a broad range of experiences through singing, playing of simple instruments, and listening. Such a course, however, is usually available only to students in grades seven and eight. There is a very definite need for some type of general music course at the senior high school level.

The following study of Medieval arts, covering the period from approximately 1200 to 1400, contains material that may be used in a unit of study for either the junior or the senior high school level. It is designed to serve as a source from which materials for class presentation may be drawn, and it may be modified or enlarged upon depending on the needs of the particular teaching situation.

It is the opinion of the writer that the understanding of an art form

can most easily be grasped when it is related to other forms of artistic expression. Musicians and painters, for example, have for centuries expressed similar ideas, each in his own medium, and the ideas that served as the basis for the creative endeavors of the Gothic era were not the isolated thoughts of the artist as an individual, but were a reflection of the thoughts of medieval society as a whole. Therefore, this is not a study of medieval music as an isolated art form, but it is rather related in a very real way to the other arts of the period, both visual and literary: architecture, sculpture, stained glass windows, drama, painting, and literature.

The character of the products of the painter's brush, the sculptor's hammer, and the composer's pen were determined to a great extent by the social phenomena of the times. Theological, economic, philosophical, political, and social forces all contributed in forming the end results of Gothic creative expression. For this reason a certain amount of historical background is necessary in order to understand the works that were created in these surroundings.

I am indebted to W. W. Norton and Co., Appleton-Century-Crofts, Harvard University Press, Desclee Co., and The University Prints for permission to use certain illustrative material.

My gratitude is extended to Dr. Harold Luce for his guidance and supervision as director of this thesis. My thanks are also due to the other members of my graduate committee: Miss Birdie H. Holloway, Dr. Lee

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE . . . . .	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	viii
 Chapter	
I. LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES . . . . .	1
The Medieval Nature	
The Church	
Philosophy	
The Crusades	
Chivalry	
Cities and Cultural Centers	
Education	
Music in the Universities	
II. THE VISUAL AND LITERARY ARTS. . . . .	53
Cathedrals	
Sculpture	
Stained Glass Windows	
Drama	
Painting	
Literature	
III. MUSIC . . . . .	127
Troubadours	
Secular Polyphony	
Sacred Monody	
Notation of Gregorian Chant	
The Mass	
Sacred Polyphony	
Musical Instruments	

Chapter	Page
IV. CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	223
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	226
APPENDIX. . . . .	232

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Plate	Page
Page from Metz Pontifical Illumination of a Church Dedication Fitz-William Museum, Cambridge . . . . .	Frontispiece
I. Porte de L'aude, Carcassonne XII-XIII Century . . . . .	52
II. Cathedral, Beauvais View from Southwest . . . . .	57
III. Cathedral, Beauvais--Choir . . . . .	58
IV. Church, Vignory--Nave, Looking East . . . . .	59
V. Cathedral, Amiens Choir from Triforium . . . . .	60
VI. Plans on French Cathedrals Amiens, Chartres, Paris . . . . .	63
VII. Cathedral (Notre Dame), Paris View from Southwest . . . . .	64
VIII. Cathedral, Rheims--West End . . . . .	65
IX. Cathedral, Chartres Nave, Looking East . . . . .	70
X. Cathedral, Chartres Choir and Nave, Looking West . . . . .	71
XI. Cathedral, Chartres--West End . . . . .	73
XII. Cathedral, Chartres--West Portal . . . . .	74
XIII. Cathedral, Cologne--West End . . . . .	76



Plate		Page
XIV.	Figures from Central Portal, West Front Cathedral, Chartres . . . . .	80
XV.	Saint Theodore Cathedral, Chartres--South Porch. . . . .	81
XVI.	Tympanum: The Last Judgment Cathedral, Bourges--Central Portal . . . . .	83
XVII.	Heaven: Abraham's Bosom; Weighing of Souls Detail of Tympanum: The Last Judgment Cathedral, Bourges--Central Portal . . . . .	84
XVIII.	Annunciation and Visitation Cathedral, Rheims--Façade . . . . .	85
XIX.	The Virgin Cathedral, Amiens--Portal of Vierge Dorée . . . . .	87
XX.	Charles V and Jeanne de Bourbon From Portal of Church of the Celestine, Paris Louvre, Paris . . . . .	88
XXI.	Two Grotesques Notre Dame, Paris . . . . .	89
XXII.	Madonna Enthroned, With Saints and Angels Cimabue Uffizi, Florence . . . . .	101
XXIII.	Madonna Enthroned, With Angels (Rucellai Madonna) Duccio di Buoninsegna Uffizi, Florence . . . . .	103
XXIV.	The Annunciation Simone Martini Uffizi, Florence . . . . .	104

Plate	Page
XXV. Madonna Enthroned Giotto Uffizi, Florence . . . . .	112
XXVI. The Bewailing of Christ Giotto Chapel of the Arena, Padua . . . . .	113
XXVII. The Flight into Egypt Giotto Chapel of the Arena, Padua . . . . .	115
XXVIII. Saint Francis Preaching to the Birds Giotto Upper Church, S. Francesco, Assisi. . . . .	166
XXIX. The Death of Saint Francis Giotto Bardi Chapel, S. Croce, Florence . . . . .	167
XXX. Page from Belleville Breviary Illuminated by Jean Pucelle Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris . . . . .	168
XXXI. Facsimile from Chantilly Codex c. 1400. . . . .	169
XXXII. Hans Memling, Altar for Najera, Museum in Antwerp (late 15th century), With zither, <u>trumscheit</u> , lute, trumpet, and oboe . . . . .	209
XXXIII. Hans Memling, Altar for Najera, Museum in Antwerp (late 15th century), With trumpets, portative, harp, and fiddle . . . . .	211
XXXIV. Oliphant from A.D. 1198(?) Vienna, Museum of Fine Arts. . . . .	212

## CHAPTER I

### LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

#### The Medieval Nature

Pity and brutality, piety and disbelief, humility and egotism--the medieval man was a mixture of all these diverse feelings. He was the child of an age filled with paradox, an age in which the ideal and the practice were often irreconcilable. There was a real want of balance in his emotional make-up, for the society of which he was a part reflected the influence of a multitude of contrasting theories and actualities.

Perhaps the most far-reaching of these contrasts was that between the two great social institutions of the Middle Ages: feudalism and monasticism.<sup>1</sup> The feudal code was based on the subjugation of one man to another. This relationship stretched into a complex pyramid with the serf subject to the lord, the lord to the baron, etc., ending with the king in the position of supreme authority. A social caste system, this form of organization offered little opportunity for a man to advance beyond the status into which he was born.

The monastic organization also had its system of rank from subdeacon to pope, but in this hierarchy a man's position was determined by his personal

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<sup>1</sup>Helen Huss Parkhurst, Cathedral (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1936), p. 91.

merit and not by accident of birth. All worldly possessions and attachments were renounced, and personalities were merged into a common fellowship. These two institutions, feudalism and monasticism, so different in nature and intent, constituted the basis of the social structure of the Middle Ages.

The middle class, which forms the backbone of twentieth-century society, was virtually non-existent in Gothic Europe. The elegance and pagentry characteristic of the way of life of the wealthy landowner stood out in bold relief against the dull background of the devastating poverty of the poor.<sup>1</sup>

The man of the Gothic era showed amazing maturity in the creative expression of his artistic endeavors, but his emotional immaturity was striking. Being totally incapable of a middle-of-the-road stability, his moods constantly fluctuated between extreme joy and extreme sorrow, between bitter hatred and intense compassion.<sup>2</sup>

As the Gothic temperament was marked by youthful vitality and energy, so Gothic man was youthful, actually child-like, in his thoughts and actions. The Children's Crusade could never have come about had it not been for the amazing naïveté of the people. Being highly dramatic in nature and easily influenced, they eagerly followed any leader who could arouse their emotions. Even their choice of entertainment was child-like--their fascination for min-

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<sup>1</sup>William Fleming, Arts and Ideas (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1955), p. 293.

<sup>2</sup>Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1954), p. 10.

strels, jugglers, and trained animals.<sup>1</sup>

As children are restless, so was the medieval population. They needed very little urging to embark on a pilgrimage to a distant shrine. Wandering merchants and craftsmen, itinerant clergy, scholars drifting from one seat of learning to another, traveling minstrels and jugglers all filled the roads. There was always the menace of the vagabond robber or highwayman who was forced to move about in order to evade the law. Indeed it seemed that during the Middle Ages the entire population of Western Europe was either coming or going.<sup>2</sup>

The men of that time always oscillate between the fear of hell and the most naive joy, between cruelty and tenderness, between harsh asceticism and insane attachment to the delights of this world, between hatred and goodness, always running to extremes.<sup>3</sup>

Records dating from the period mention numerous accounts of charity on the part of the rich landowners and of those devoted to the religious life. The material generosity of the wealthy was matched only by their own greed, particularly concerning their relationships with their own serfs.<sup>4</sup>

This was an age not only of intense preoccupation with religion, but also one of murder, thievery, and almost every crime known to man. Criminals were seldom caught, but when they were, their punishment was a cruel spectacle

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<sup>1</sup>Parkhurst, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>3</sup>Huizinga, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>4</sup>Parkhurst, op. cit., pp. 103-104.

for all the citizens to see and enjoy. If, on the other hand, it was felt that the offender should be pardoned, that pardon was as complete as the punishment might have been.<sup>1</sup>

The Church, perhaps the most vital example of love, was an instrument of terror in the hands of those Christians who felt it to be their duty to smite the heathen. Medieval man needed but a suggestion to march enthusiastically into the East by the thousands to slaughter the unbelievers. His taste for blood and violence was unmistakable.<sup>2</sup>

The age of faith was also one of doubt. Nearly every tenet of the Church was questioned, an attitude heralding the approaching age of reason. Heresies began to spring up causing the Church to tighten its hold upon its communicants.<sup>3</sup>

This era, that seems at first glance to be full of complacency, actually was one which showed unmistakable signs of discontent and the desire for liberty. Serfs resented the demands of their lords; barons challenged the authority of kings; and in numerous instances kings rejected the supremacy of the pope. The establishment of towns and communes came about, giving more freedom to the inhabitants. Both the demand for more liberty and the desire to be led were strongly felt.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Will Durant, The Age of Faith (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1950), p. 829.

<sup>2</sup>Parkhurst, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 104-105.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 105.



If one would venture to name the virtue held in highest regard by the Church of the Middle Ages, that virtue would undoubtedly be purity.<sup>1</sup> For clergy and laity alike, those who strived for eternal life probably considered the repression of the physical appetite to be the surest way of counteracting the taint of Adam's sin.

Men and women who were members of religious orders were required to take a vow of chastity. For the monk, only the Virgin could be the bride, and Christ was the bridegroom of the nun. Though there were many in the monastic life who conscientiously upheld this ideal, many others fell short. A number of documents from the times reveal shocking accounts of promiscuity of all types among both men and women who had renounced the world and its pleasures.<sup>2</sup> One cannot estimate how much of this actually existed, for, in accord with human nature, deviations from the norm are far more likely to be recorded than are cases in which the standards of the norm are observed.

Also in the lives of the laity are seen sharp contrasts between the ideal and the practice as far as purity is concerned. Sensuousness and lust abounded, and chivalry sanctioned the practice of adultery.

There arose in the Middle Ages an attitude toward woman that conflicted with the status she had held for centuries. Because of the fate that her ancestor Eve brought down upon Adam and the whole of the human race, she was con-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

sidered vicious and despicable. Although this attitude was felt throughout the course of the Gothic era, there also developed a view of womankind that was entirely in opposition to this.<sup>1</sup>

Because the Virgin Mary was her sister, woman was a symbol of purity to be adored and held in reverence. This is seen in the troubadour poetry of the period. Only in the Gothic era could two attitudes of such completely opposite nature exist concomitantly. Only the naive Gothic mind was capable of synthesizing the two views.

As violent contrasts played such a part in fashioning medieval thought and action, so did the arts experience a sense of turmoil within themselves. Art cannot exist as an entity unto itself as though it were in a vacuum. It necessarily must show the effect of the conditions and attitudes of the society of which the artist is a part.

Prior to this period, practically all of the works in music and the visual arts were created by unknown artists. No longer satisfied with anonymity, the Gothic artist sought to receive the recognition of his fellows.<sup>2</sup> For the first time, names were connected with the arts: Leonin and Perotin with music, Cimabue and Giotto with painting, Villard de Honnecourt with architecture.

Not only was there the conflict between obscurity in the praise of God and the attainment of fame, but there was also a struggle involved in the choice

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>Fleming, op. cit., p. 293.



between expressing the things of this world and the aspirations of the next. Pre-Gothic sculpture had been stiff and impersonal. The Gothic figure, being reluctant to assume a routine position in a row of others like himself, began to show signs of a humanistic tendency. A conflict in literature existed between the use of the traditional Latin and that of the vernacular tongue. This was to continue until Dante made secure the position of the vernacular when he chose to write The Divine Comedy in Italian. In music a distinction between the sacred and the secular styles was evolving. More startling was the simultaneous use of Latin and vernacular texts in the various voices of the motet.<sup>1</sup> Permeating the entire medieval scene was the questioning attitude--the first real expression of individuality. The unquestioning, child-like faith that had been the heart of philosophical thought prior to the twelfth century was challenged by the reason of the early scholastics, anticipating the coming clash between faith and knowledge.<sup>2</sup> The turmoil, the violence, the paradoxes, though manifested cautiously at first, constituted the Gothic spirit which, gaining in momentum with the years, paved the way for the approaching Renaissance.

### The Church

In order to understand the function and the importance of the Roman Catholic Church in medieval Europe, it must be studied from both the sacred

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 294.

and the political standpoints. To the medieval mind there was no such thing as the separation of Church and State. Christ gave spiritual power to Peter, who is considered to be the first head of the Church, and from Peter the power was directly conferred to popes of succeeding generations. For this reason the divine authority of the pope was reckoned to be greater than that of secular kings. The resulting conflict between the Church and the empire was to last for centuries.<sup>1</sup>

The two greatest powers of the Church were the establishing of official doctrine and the administering of the sacraments. The sacraments, ceremonies representing the granting of divine grace, were seven in number. The most important of the seven was baptism, which was necessary for the cleansing of man's original sin. Regardless of the standard of perfection observed in a man's earthly life, without baptism salvation was unattainable.<sup>2</sup> Confirmation, usually administered in a child's seventh year, was the ceremony in which the bishop conferred upon the Christian all of his duties as part of the body of the Church. More important than confirmation was the sacrament of penance, which involved private confession before a priest and the performance of prescribed penitential duties in order to gain absolution.<sup>3</sup> Though a person might be absolved of the guilt of his sin while on earth, he was still required to

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 759.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 738.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 739.

atone for these transgressions by experiencing temporal punishment in purgatory.

An indulgence might be granted by the Church exempting the Christian from part or all of his purgatorial experience. Indulgences might be acquired through repentance, prayer, making gifts to the Church, or a combination of these. From this practice arose the cult of the pardoners, men who roamed the countryside exhibiting real or false relics for the purpose of exacting contributions from the people, but pocketing a large percentage of the profits for their own use. Though the Church made sincere efforts to check such abuses, pardoners continued to flourish.<sup>1</sup>

Second in importance to baptism was the celebration of the Eucharist or Holy Communion. The Church required that every Christian receive the sacrament at least once a year. The supernatural element appears in the doctrine of transubstantiation, the miraculous changing of the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ.<sup>2</sup> History is full of countless miracles attributed to the Host (the bread). Its magical significance became so great that it was common for people to carry the wafer home in the mouth in an attempt to use its power to accomplish miracles of their own.<sup>3</sup>

When marriage became a sacrament, its sacred nature gave a much

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 740.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 737.

needed sense of dignity to the matrimonial contract. In the sacrament of the holy orders the bishop passed on to a new priest the apostolic power that had been conferred directly from Christ.<sup>1</sup>

In the final act of his earthly life, a man confessed his sins to a priest whose act of absolution would save the Christian from the pains of hell. In granting the sacrament of extreme unction the priest anointed the body in order that it might be cleansed and fit for its eventual resurrection.<sup>2</sup>

It was difficult for medieval man to summon enough courage to pray directly to such a severe God. Only from the Church itself were such prayers possible. The layman's prayers were most often prayers of intercession to Christ, Mary, or the saints.<sup>3</sup>

By the tenth century the Church had canonized twenty-five thousand saints, and, needless to say, there was a saint for almost everything. Every city, church, craft, or event in life had its patron saint. Tanners prayed to St. Bartholomew because he had been flayed alive. St. Sebastian's help was petitioned in times of peril. St. Gall protected chickens. St. Blaise cured the sore throat. Images of the saints were worshipped to such an extent that the people were accused of idolatry. Chapels, churches, monasteries, and cathedrals found it profitable to house the relics of at least one saint. Since

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 741.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 742.

these relics were said to have great supernatural powers, the people were willing to pay to see them.<sup>1</sup> Of course there arose from this a doubtful duplication of certain objects. Each of three isolated churches in France possessed, at the same time, the complete corpse of Mary Magdalene.<sup>2</sup>

Two of the Church's sources of income have already been mentioned: the purchase of indulgences and the fee for observing sacred relics. The steadiest source of Church income was the tithe. From the time of Charlemagne all secular estates were required to give ten per cent of their produce or income annually to the local church. With the tenth century each local parish gave a part of its tithe income to the bishop of the diocese.<sup>3</sup>

The Church exacted a revenue from its own lands which had been attained through purchase, gift, or as the result of a defaulted mortgage. It was customary under the feudal system for each landowner to leave something to the Church when he died. Failure to do this might make him a suspect of heresy, and his body could be refused burial in consecrated ground.<sup>4</sup>

Prior to 1200, Church property was exempt from secular taxation. It was not unusual for a cathedral or a monastery to own several thousand manors and as many as ten towns. This gradual accumulation of wealth and property

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 744.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 765.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 766.

was openly scorned by heretics and was a target for the reproach of the State.<sup>1</sup>

An especially important aspect of the Church in the Medieval era was the growth of monasteries. As late as the thirteenth century, Christian parents often gave their seven-year old sons to the monasteries as oblates. When the boy came of age he was free to return to the world if he wished. In the monastery approximately four hours of each day were spent in reading, teaching, charity, labor, and rest.<sup>2</sup> These holy men opened the marsh lands to farming, built abbeys and churches, and became expert in scores of handicrafts.<sup>3</sup> Though their intentions were of the highest order, often they fell short when it came to virtue. The Church itself was the harshest critic of those among its number who sinned.<sup>4</sup>

St. Francis of Assisi was one of the most dynamic of the monastic reformers. Born Giovanni de Bernadone in 1182, he was a rich, spoiled young man who delighted in squandering his father's money in the pursuit of amusement.<sup>5</sup> It was soon after he volunteered to join the army of Pope Innocent III in 1204 that he experienced the vision that changed his life. Despite vigorous protests from his father, the young man became a hermit dedicated to preach

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 785.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 786.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 787.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 792.



the Kingdom of Heaven and to exist in an atmosphere of extreme poverty.<sup>1</sup>

Francis and his followers discouraged intellectual study because, to them, the only advantage to be gained from secular knowledge was in the accumulation of wealth and power. Frequently the Fratres Minores (Friars Minor) used song in their preaching, and Francis even spoke of their being "gleemen of God."<sup>2</sup>

Numerous legends sprang from Francis' feeling of kinship with all living things. One story tells of his preaching to the birds who flew down to him and remained still until the sermon was finished.<sup>3</sup>

Francis and his twelve followers went to Rome in 1210 to request of Pope Innocent III the permission to establish a new religious order. The Pope thought the restrictions of such a life of humility to be too severe, but he reconsidered because of Francis' persistence, and the First Order of St. Francis was established in 1210.<sup>4</sup>

St. Dominic, born in 1170, also adopted a life of poverty. With his establishment of the Dominican order in 1220, he joined St. Francis in the movement toward a reform in monastic life.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 793.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 795.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 797.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 798.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 803.

There had been religious orders for women ever since Scholastica, twin sister of St. Benedict, established the first Benedictine nunnery in 530. Convents, too, were transformed by St. Francis. Inspired by him, Santa Clara in 1216 established the Poor Clares (Clarissi) as a Second Order of St. Francis.<sup>1</sup>

These nuns were unusually devoted in their service to mankind. For centuries they provided the only form of higher education available to girls. Convents often were places of refuge for high-born ladies who had been widowed or who were unable to find a husband. By 1300 the number of nuns in Europe equalled the number of monks.<sup>2</sup>

The ecclesiastic legislation of the Church, the canon law, covered a larger area than that of any state law of the time. It concerned not only Church dogma and structure, but included laws of marriage, burial, adultery, and wills; rules for schools and universities; regulations concerning war and peace; laws covering judicial procedures; and rules governing the relationship of Church and State. The Church was permitted to administer physical or spiritual punishment to offenders, but it was not allowed to prescribe capital punishment.<sup>3</sup>

Excommunication was a vital weapon as a form of spiritual punishment.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 805.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 807.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 755.



The victim was forbidden to partake of any of the Church ritual or sacraments, and no Christian was permitted either to talk or to eat with him. In addition, though he could be sued, he could not initiate a law suit or receive any money or property through inheritance.<sup>1</sup>

More severe than excommunication was the interdict, which could be enacted only by the pope. Under this proclamation all or most of the Church services of a particular geographical area were discontinued. In an atmosphere in which the people were fearful of death's coming before sins were absolved and thus condemning the sinner to everlasting hell, it is no wonder that the people felt a real need for the sacraments and hastily made peace with the Church upon excommunication.<sup>2</sup>

After the eleventh century, both excommunication and interdict began to lose their effectiveness because of excessive use, and the power of canon law began to decline throughout Europe. As civil governments gradually grew stronger in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, they began to assume the authority that the Church previously had held regarding education, war, economy, marriage, and morals.<sup>3</sup>

### Philosophy

There were several reasons for the sudden awakening of philosophic

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 756.

inquiry in the Middle Ages. The Byzantine East had kept alive the heritage of Plato and Aristotle, an Eastern influence that crept into Europe with the returning crusaders. Twelfth and thirteenth-century translations of Greek and Arabic works posed a definite threat to Christian theology, so the Church had no choice but to derive its own system of philosophy to counteract these forces. The general influence of a gradual accumulation of wealth brought about increased opportunities for study and provided more leisure time for thought.<sup>1</sup>

Though the majority of the theologians of the Middle Ages were not philosophers, all of the philosophers of this period were theologians. It has been said that when laymen began to undertake serious philosophical thought, this marked the beginning of the Renaissance.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally medieval philosophy was greatly influenced by the prevailing religious spirit of the times inasmuch as this pervading religious spirit was characteristic of all the products of that age.<sup>3</sup> Philosophers from the twelfth century to the dawning of the Renaissance were mainly concerned with three concepts: the origin of ideas, the extent of human liberty, and the relationship of human will and knowledge. Constant reference to the teachings of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 949.

<sup>2</sup>C. G. Crump and E. F. Jacob (ed.), The Legacy of the Middle Ages (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1926), p. 227.

<sup>3</sup>Maurice de Wulf, Philosophy and Civilization in the Middle Ages (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1922), p. 156.

Aristotle kept these thinkers from assuming a theological approach.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, theologians concerned themselves with the concepts of the Trinity, redemption, and the supernatural end of mankind. Instead of Aristotle, scriptural authority was employed here.<sup>2</sup>

There were some questions that were the concern of both philosophers and theologians, but the two approaches were quite different. The philosopher considered only reason, whereas the theologian began with faith and proceeded under the guidance of a supernatural force.<sup>3</sup>

Scholasticism is a very general term used to categorize the multitude of conflicting theological and philosophical ideas that were taught in schools from the eleventh to the fourteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Most of these attempted to reconcile the theological ideas of the Church with the philosophical speculations of the ancient Greeks. These ventures were not heretical in nature because they did not seek to deny any of the tenets of the Church. In a departure from the blind faith of the early Middle Ages, the scholastic thinkers wanted to show that Church doctrine was completely within reason and able to be justified through man's thinking.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 152.

<sup>4</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 979.

<sup>5</sup>S. E. Frost, Jr., Ideas of the Great Philosophers (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1942), p. 21.

In the period from 1150 to 1250 Latin translations of Aristotle's works began to appear in Europe causing churchmen to think in terms of synthesizing the ideas of Greek metaphysics and Christian theology.<sup>1</sup> The Church began to suspect that the reading of pagan thinkers had weakened the faith of some people and had encouraged their heretical tendencies. As a result of such thinking, the Church council in Paris in 1210 forbade the reading of the works of Plato, Aristotle, and other authors of Greek and Arabic thought.<sup>2</sup>

Under the influence of such a growing intellectual curiosity, the Church's ban could not survive. Twenty-one years later Gregory IX pardoned the scholars who had disobeyed the Paris ruling and ordered that Aristotle's works be examined and censored. Even this did not last, for the original Latin translations of some of Aristotle's works were required for study at the University of Paris in 1255.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time intellectual activity was furthered by the establishment of two great religious orders devoted to study. From the ranks of the Dominicans and the Franciscans came a number of great university professors.<sup>4</sup>

The main difference between the philosophies of ancient Greece and medieval Christendom was in the fact that the Greeks had no concept of man's

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 953.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 954.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>De Wulf, op. cit., p. 65.

inherited personal sinfulness. There was no problem of salvation from damnation in their world in which life was an insecure thing that could be snuffed out at a sudden impulse of the gods. Since the Greeks had to deal with little theological phenomena, their philosophy was almost entirely secular. The medieval Christian, on the other hand, pictured his earthly existence as a temporary sojourn to fit him for a greater life in the hereafter. He was forced to endure the miseries of daily life in atonement for the blot of original sin which he innately bore.<sup>1</sup>

To the Greek, virtue was a reward in itself, but the Christian was virtuous at the command of God. The living of a Christian life did not automatically guarantee salvation, but it was a prerequisite. Some superhuman power was essential, and medieval man believed that the grace of God was needed for him to have the faith necessary for salvation.<sup>2</sup>

The writings of the early Medieval period (from the ninth to the twelfth century) were based largely on the thoughts of Augustine, who lived from 354 to 430.<sup>3</sup> Remaining a Platonist even after his conversion to Christianity<sup>4</sup>, Augustine leaned toward mysticism in his anti-intellectual, subjective approach

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<sup>1</sup>Bertrand Russell, Wisdom of the West, ed. Paul Foulkes (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1959), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Crump and Jacob, op. cit., p. 228.

<sup>4</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 65.

to philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Abélard (1079 - 1142) was one of the men instrumental in the establishment of the University of Paris.<sup>2</sup> In his best known work, Sic et Non (Yes and No), he states that since the Bible was written in such a fashion that unlearned men might understand it, reason should be used in its interpretation. Another of his arguments against a strictly literal interpretation of the Scriptures was that errors were likely to have been made in translation or in copying.<sup>3</sup>

Abélard's theory of good and evil caused a disturbance among the clergy because it threatened to nullify the theory that sin is a transgression of God's law. According to Abélard, the wrongness of an action does not lie in the act itself, but in the intention of the actor. Although a man might commit a wrong deed, if he honestly sought to do right in his own mind, his act was not a sin. In order to sin, a man must work against his own conscience and not only against that of others.<sup>4</sup>

The most disturbing of all of Abélard's conclusions was his belief that there are no mysteries in Christian dogma, that all parts of the doctrine are capable of being explained through reason.<sup>5</sup> Early medieval thinkers taught

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 931.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 939.

<sup>4</sup>Frost, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>5</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 945.



that a man must have faith before he is capable of understanding. The more unreasonable a concept may be, the more faith it requires for satisfactory understanding. The mind must never question the validity of such concepts, since a belief through faith must precede all attempts to reason.<sup>1</sup>

In Abélard's mind, reason preceded faith. This was not an heretical idea, for in his thinking he never imagined that reason would prove any part of the doctrine untrue.<sup>2</sup> His willingness to allow the mind freedom to question endangered the solidity of the Christian dogma. Because of this seeming impiety he was condemned by the Church to confinement in a monastery until his death.<sup>3</sup>

Of all of the early scholastic thinkers, Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274) probably had the most profound influence in the shaping of contemporary religious thought and practice.<sup>4</sup> Thomas could see no advantage in condemning the works of Aristotle.<sup>5</sup> In fact he attempted to establish Church doctrine on Aristotle's pagan philosophy.<sup>6</sup>

In his most extensive work, Summa Theologica, Thomas attempted to

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<sup>1</sup>Frost, op. cit., p. 263.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 947.

<sup>4</sup>Russell, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>5</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 962.

<sup>6</sup>Russell, op. cit., p. 156.

state and defend the entirety of catholic doctrine in philosophy and theology.<sup>1</sup> The form of the work in itself sets it apart as a real monument of intellectual labor. In the manner of a debate the question is stated and followed by arguments and objections from both the positive and the negative sides. The opposing points of view are stated with such clarity and force that the work has been called a summary of heresy as well as an encyclopedia of dogma.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas believed that the fact that man's knowledge has certain limitations proves the existence of a supernatural world that can be understood only through faith. Man should be able to make a distinction between what can be understood by reason and what must be understood by faith.<sup>3</sup>

According to Thomas, it is permissible for scholars and theologians to come in contact with heretical opinions and objections to Church doctrine, but common laymen must not hear these because the minds of such men are unable to cope with concepts of this nature.<sup>4</sup>

God, not man, is at the center of the Thomist philosophy. It is impossible for man in his finite state to contemplate the infinite nature of God. Man cannot discover what God is, but he is able to understand only what God

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 966.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 967.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 968.



is not.<sup>1</sup>

Medieval man's delight in flights of fancy came into play even in his theological beliefs. Since there are angels as a part of the Heavenly Kingdom, reasoned Thomas, so there must be devils to carry out the will of Satan. These little demons were very real to the populace and were said to have performed all manner of harmful deeds.<sup>2</sup>

Rather than considering man only as a soul as did Plato and Augustine, Thomas viewed man as a synthesis of both soul and body. The soul that survives the death of the body has no personality and cannot function until it is united with its resurrected material form.<sup>3</sup>

The quality of human reality is the same in rich and poor alike. The serf is no less and no more a human being than is his master. Either he is a man or he is not a man. This viewpoint began to place greater importance on the value of the individual.<sup>4</sup>

Man, according to the Thomists, has a two-fold purpose. In this life it is the acquiring of truth; in the after-life it is to see the truth in God. Happiness comes only through understanding, and since only a minimum of understanding is possible in this earthly life, man can experience true happiness

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 970.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 971.

<sup>4</sup>De Wulf, op. cit., p. 58.

only in the life hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

The early fathers of the Church believed the possession of private property to be sinful and unnatural. Thomas, however, agreed with Aristotle who observed that when everything belongs equally to everyone, no one bothers to take care of anything. Though it is sinful and covetous for a man to desire more wealth than is necessary for maintaining his station in life, the mere possession of wealth is not in itself sinful. The wealthy were expected to aid in remedying the needs of those less fortunate than they.<sup>2</sup>

Another point of Thomas' departure from early Church doctrine concerned the question of slavery. Since man is naturally born free, his enslavement is an unnatural and sinful state. Aristotle, in contrast, believed that slavery came about due to the natural inequality of men. Thomas cleverly reconciled the two views by stating that it is advisable to place simple men under the care of the wise, since men with strong bodies and weak minds were originally intended to be laborers. He added that these bondmen were subject to masters only in body rather than in soul, and the master was required to treat his slaves in a spirit of Christian charity.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the men of his day, and particularly the Franciscans who favored the mysticism of Augustine, were shocked by Thomas' putting intellect

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, *op. cit.*, p. 973.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 975.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 975-76.

and understanding above faith and love. The very fact that Aristotle rather than Augustine was the basis for his reasoning seemed to exemplify the victory of pagan thought over Christianity. They felt that the concept of man as a unity of body and soul defied the idea of the soul's immortality.<sup>1</sup>

In 1309 Thomism was adopted as the doctrine of the Dominican order<sup>2</sup>, but it was not until Thomas' canonization in 1323 that the Church as a whole really accepted his teachings. In 1921 the Roman Church adopted Thomism as its official philosophy, and it is taught as such today.<sup>3</sup>

Roger Bacon (c. 1214 - 1292) was the most famous of the medieval scientists.<sup>4</sup> He was opposed to Thomism because of the great stress placed on the teachings of Aristotle. New knowledge, according to Bacon, can come only through experiment rather than through reliance on authorities.<sup>5</sup> Actually it was quite natural to attach little value to the findings of experience in a generation more involved with God and the after-life than with the things of this world.<sup>6</sup>

The Thomists' ignorance of science and mathematics drew disdainful remarks from Bacon. The rejection of custom and authority and of Scholastic

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 977.

<sup>2</sup>Russell, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>3</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 978.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 1006.

<sup>5</sup>Russell, op. cit., p. 160.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 169.

thought and Aristotelian viewpoints together with an emphasis on experimentation in science are characteristic of Bacon. His most important contribution was in laying the foundation for independent thought through his questioning of authority in both philosophy and science.<sup>1</sup>

In the Scholastic method of thought, Europe discovered the exciting world of reason. Even when taking into account the vigilant attitude of the medieval Church against heresy, men enjoyed then a freedom of thought and a freedom to question and to defend that seldom has appeared since that time.

#### The Crusades

In order to obtain a more complete view of medieval man and his culture than would otherwise be possible, it is imperative to explore the earlier institutions and events that shaped his thinking.

The Crusades (from the Spanish cruzada meaning "marked with the cross") are generally considered to be the final Act of the Drama known as the Dark Ages. Before the Crusades, the Christian West was definitely separated from the Mohammedan East, but the prolonged clash between the two great faiths marked the end of Western Europe's economic, cultural, and geographical isolation from the rest of the then-known world.<sup>2</sup>

According to Durant there were three reasons behind the attempting of

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1015.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 585.

the Crusades. First, the Seljuq Turks had captured Jerusalem and refused to permit the entry of any Christians on pilgrimages. As a second reason, the Byzantine Empire had begun to show some startling weaknesses. The collapse of this power would leave no barrier between the Turks and the West. The Church fathers, being also Europe's political leaders at the time, preferred to slaughter the heathen on their own Eastern soil rather than to have them invade Christendom. The final reason for the Crusades was a desire on the part of the Italian seaport cities of Pisa, Genoa, Venice, and Amalfi to enlarge the area of their commercial activity.<sup>1</sup>

It was in 1095 that Pope Urban II gained France's support for the First Crusade, and it was a motley assortment of men and women that assembled in the ranks. There were some devout souls with a sincere desire to liberate the Holy City from the hands of the infidels, but the ranks of the Crusaders were swollen by many who were attracted by a multitude of other more secular persuasions. Serfs were freed from obligation to their lords for the duration of the Holy War; prisoners were set free; full indulgence was promised to those who should die in the name of the Cross. Adventurers bored with life and merchants in search of new markets for trade joined the pilgrimage. When it became known that prostitutes were joining the group, a large number of wives decided to accompany their husbands.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 586.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 588.

The journey was much longer than had been anticipated, and soon the Crusaders began to plunder homes, farms, and villages in an attempt to ward off starvation.<sup>1</sup> Finally in 1099 after three years of endless marching, famine, leprosy, and fighting of incidental battles, they reached Jerusalem, captured it, and brutally slaughtered countless Jews and over seventy-thousand Moslems.<sup>2</sup>

Battle-madness, thirst for vengeance, ferocity, brutality, greed, and every hateful passion were satiated without scruple, in the name of their holy cause.<sup>3</sup>

The Second Crusade was launched in 1146 after the Mohammedans had begun to recapture Christian strongholds in the East.<sup>4</sup> This Crusade and the succeeding ones (the final one ending in 1204)<sup>5</sup> accomplished very little of their original purpose.<sup>6</sup>

Too often the Crusades are considered only in the light of their expressed purpose--the liberation of Jerusalem from the infidels; however, these were not wholly pilgrimages for the pious. Medieval man displayed here the extremes of his character ranging from his devotion to a sacred cause to his blood-thirsty greed, his lust, and his treachery.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 589.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 591-92.

<sup>3</sup>Francois Guillaume Guizot, The History of France, trans. Robert Black (New York: John B. Alden, 1884), I, 333.

<sup>4</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 594.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 602.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 609.



Though the Crusades were failures in one sense of the word, they had a marked effect on the economic, political, and cultural development of Europe. While the feudal lords of France gave of their wealth and their attention to the Crusades, the monarchy of France was beginning to accumulate power and prestige.<sup>1</sup>

The practices of bathing and shaving the beard were brought to the West by the returning Crusaders.<sup>2</sup> From the enamelled glass of Syria certain secret techniques were adopted which Europeans applied to the stained glass of their own Gothic cathedrals.<sup>3</sup> Apparently the poetry, philosophy, and science of the East made little impression on the Crusaders, of whom few were literate.<sup>4</sup>

The First Crusade greatly strengthened the Church, while the failure of the succeeding Crusades tended to weaken it. The uniting of many important people who gave of their wealth to sponsor a religious cause added importance to the papal authority. Soon the pope's men were levying taxes for the support of the Crusades in all cities and towns; however, it was not long before much of this money became a part of the Church's accumulated wealth.<sup>5</sup> With the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Clive Day, A History of Commerce (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1938), p. 83.

<sup>3</sup>Philip K. Hitti, History of the Arabs (5th ed. rev.; New York: The MacMillan Co., 1951), p. 346.

<sup>4</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 611.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



failure of the Crusades, the people regarded the wealth of the Church with increasing bitterness.<sup>1</sup>

The acquaintance with the Moslem world aroused in Europe an interest in exploration and travel. Trade with the East was greatly expanded and Oriental products found their places in European markets. Silks,<sup>2</sup> carpets, and tapestries,<sup>3</sup> came to the West. Sugar was the first luxury to be introduced to Europe, for prior to the time of the Crusades honey had been used to sweeten food.<sup>4</sup> With the flourishing of trade with the East, industry was developed in Western Europe, providing for the growth of towns and the establishment of the middle class.<sup>5</sup>

### Chivalry

One aspect of the feudal social structure that deserves separate treatment and consideration is that of chivalry, an essentially French contribution. It may seem strange that this code of behavior, from which stems today's idea of politeness, was the dominating idea in the social framework of an era known for its greed and its cruelty. Though there is some disagreement among

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 612.

<sup>2</sup>Day, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>3</sup>Hitti, op. cit., p. 168.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 667.

<sup>5</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 613.

scholars of medieval thought concerning the time of the Golden Age of Chivalry, it is generally safe to say that chivalry enjoyed its greatest popularity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries before its rapid decay in the fourteenth and fifteenth.<sup>1</sup>

Since the concept of religion so permeated the whole of medieval thought, it is natural that chivalry should have had a sacred basis for being. The archangel Michael is credited with originating the knightly ideal on the angelic as well as the human plane.<sup>2</sup>

To the medieval eye, chivalry was the noblest form of secular life. Since the medieval mind did not recognize as being good or noble anything existing apart from religion, the knight was required to possess a deep devotion to the Church.<sup>3</sup> The life of the knight was, in effect, an attempt to recapture the glory and fame of classical heroes. This heavily romanticized hero worship was the source of the knight's desire for personal honor, glory, and fame. He was required to maintain a triune existence as gentleman, hero, and saint; but the extent to which the demands of personal piety were fulfilled is questionable.<sup>4</sup> A tremendous gulf existed between the knightly ideal of piety, humility, and chastity and the greedy, sensuous, animalistic tendencies of the

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar Prestage (ed.), Chivalry (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Huizinga, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>4</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 574.

knights themselves. Fortunately there were those knights who did pattern their lives after the knightly ideal, thus helping to salvage the reputation of the chivalric institution.<sup>1</sup>

Chivalry could not have flourished had it not been backed by strong ethical principles, nor could it have survived without the excitement of physical combat. But even with these two, it could never have been perpetuated without love.<sup>2</sup> It is the sensuous impulse that compels the hero to undergo suffering for the lady of his choice. Quite naturally this idea progresses to the point that the hero does not merely suffer for the sake of his lady, but in order that he might save her from suffering. And it is here that is found the chivalric ideal, the subject of erotic medieval love poetry: the rescue of virginity from a threatening foe. One may even venture to say that sex is the motivating factor even in cases in which the damsel is rescued from an impotent dragon.<sup>3</sup>

Such an age of romanticists could not completely satisfy the needs of the imagination through literature or any of the other more passive forms of expression but sorely needed the elements of action and drama that were provided in the tournaments. In addition to the games and contests, tournaments included festivals of song, dance, and other forms of entertainment too devious to mention. The tournaments, which might last for a day or as long as a week,

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<sup>1</sup>Prestage, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>2</sup>Huizinga, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

might be held in celebration of a marriage, the initiation of a new knight, or in honor of visiting nobility.<sup>1</sup> Often the ever popular so-called unknown knight was present in the lists and contributed to the scene an air of mystery and gloom. The Church was quite vocal in its protests against the tournaments and frequently prohibited them.

The candidate for knighthood was required to be a member of a titled family or a family of landowners. At the age of seven or eight he began his life of strict discipline by entering the service of a lord as his page. At twelve or fourteen he became his lord's squire, serving him constantly from the dinner table to the battle field. During all of this time, the young squire was gaining experience in combat procedure and the manipulation of weapons. At the end of his apprenticeship he was eligible to be received into a knightly order.<sup>2</sup>

Another aspect of chivalry included the romantic idea of love in the Medieval era, a love which existed completely apart from marriage. In those times a woman chose her mate because of his property and wealth and was attracted to other men because of their charm. Poets, traditionally being poor, had no hope of wedding any of the high-born damsels, so they sang of their love in torridly passionate poetry. Quite often a lord whose wife had been flattered in such a fashion would give to the poet a handsome reward.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 573.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 572.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 576.

Chivalry in its beginnings had no concern for women, its main interest being combat, but the middle of the twelfth century saw a distinct change when the love for a lady became the motivating force for combat.<sup>1</sup> Soon it became obligatory for a knight or a squire to gain the favor of a lady, and the lady was expected to have both a husband and a lover. In this way chivalry soon developed into a giant institution of bigamy with the typical gentleman's having both a legal wife procured for business purposes and another lady whose commands he endeavored to fulfill. This aspect of gallantry encountered fierce opposition from the Church, but largely because of moral decay within the Church itself, its efforts to stamp out such adulterous practices failed.<sup>2</sup>

In summarizing the impact of chivalry and its effect upon man it is necessary to consider both the vices and the virtues of the institution. The former may be enumerated:

1. Chivalry advocated and promoted war for its own sake.
2. It was an exclusive institution actively involving only the upper classes of the populace.
3. Its emphasis on religion was at the same time both formal and paradoxical. The paradox is illustrated in the manner in which the knights mercilessly slaughtered heretics and heathen in the name of the Cross.
4. Beneath a disguise of refined manners chivalry supported a code of immorality.<sup>3</sup>

In its idealized form chivalry was based on three elements which pro-

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<sup>1</sup>Prestage, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

duced the following virtues:

1. War--courage, loyalty, generosity
2. Religion--fidelity to the Church, obedience, chastity
3. Gallantry--courtesy, humility, beneficence<sup>1</sup>

Thus, even though in the day of its dominance chivalry had defects grave and deplorable, nevertheless, it remains a glorious and honorable name, and its principles, freed from their medieval accidents, are among the noblest and most splendid that have assisted the progress of the human race.<sup>2</sup>

### Cities and Cultural Centers

Cultural activity in Medieval Europe was nurtured by several institutions: monasteries, cathedrals, courts, universities, as well as towns and cities. These centers of culture were not equal in importance, nor were they all influential throughout the entire period.<sup>3</sup>

In the early years of the era, monasteries provided the sole refuge of learning. Often isolated in the midst of a barbaric wilderness, they made a contribution that was meager by any standards, but in view of the fact that men of learning existed in small, sharply defined groups separated by miles of ignorance, even the smallest contribution toward the preservation and cultivation of knowledge should be recognized.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Homer Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927), p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 33.



Most monasteries maintained a small library of Bibles and theological works. Those with a school for novices often kept a small supply of elementary textbooks. A list of deceased members of the order and a record of the income from the monastery's property usually were the only bookkeeping tasks involved.<sup>1</sup> Some monasteries kept detailed historical records, but this practice was not obligatory.<sup>2</sup>

The monastery at Bec, located just north of the Alps, was known throughout Europe for its cultural activity in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Even though a pope, many bishops, and several abbots were trained there,<sup>3</sup> its library at the beginning of the twelfth century contained only one hundred sixty-five books.

Some cathedrals began to replace monasteries as the chief cultural centers. Each had a library, a school, and its archives. The most intellectually active cathedrals in the twelfth century were located in Northern France. At Chartres and Orleans arose a renewed interest in classical learning.<sup>5</sup> The scholastic method was a product of Rheims and Laon, and beneath the shadow of Notre Dame de Paris sprang up the first of the great northern universities.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 48.



During the twelfth century all of the great men in the fields of poetry, theology, and education were associated with cathedrals.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time the cathedral schools were flourishing, feudal courts as secular institutions contributed their share to the development of learning. It was quite common for the lord of the manor to be unable to read or write, but there was almost always a chaplain who said Mass in the chapel and who could take care of any necessary correspondence. Later, in some of the larger courts, a secretary was employed to take care of the records of the manor. Tutors at this time were rarely employed. Poets and jongleurs appeared frequently but spasmodically.<sup>2</sup>

As the small feudal courts consolidated, their function as intellectual centers increased. Historians frequently were employed, and their records furnish valuable information for today's student of history. The most important cultural contributions of the large courts was in their literary patronage.<sup>3</sup>

Though both the universities at Paris and at Oxford were founded in the twelfth century, it was in the thirteenth that the universities assumed their powerful role as seats of learning.<sup>4</sup> Both Paris and Oxford began as schools of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

theology based on philosophy, but with the thirteenth century additional faculties were established to teach all of the known branches of learning.<sup>1</sup> The university at Bologna had a flourishing school of law in the twelfth century;<sup>2</sup> and the medical school at Salerno, Italy, although it never became a university, attracted students from all over Europe as early as the ninth century.<sup>3</sup>

In fourteenth-century France, the towns and cities of any cultural importance were those that housed universities (Paris, Orleans, Angers, Montpellier, Toulouse) or cathedrals (Paris, Chartres, Rheims, Amiens).<sup>4</sup> Paris, for example, in 1314 was a city of 200,000 inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, London could boast of only 40,000 residents. The entire country was ninety per cent rural. Its one hundred towns, which for accuracy's sake should be termed villages, and its one city, London, were far inferior to the towns of France and Italy as far as wealth, beauty, and intellectual activity are concerned.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the English were a boisterous and energetic people, taking great

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<sup>1</sup>James J. Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries (New York: Catholic Summer School Press, 1913), p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 697.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 696.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 680.

pride in their one city with its Westminster Abbey and Tower of London.<sup>1</sup>

In the development of self-governing cities, Spain led the medieval world. Kings, in their efforts to secure the cities' support against the nobles, issued to the cities charters of self-government. In 1258 Barcelona was a free city ruled by a council of two hundred men of whom the majority were employed in industry or trades.<sup>2</sup>

Almost in anticipation of her leading role in the Renaissance, Italy boasted during this era a number of cities that were thriving centers of culture, commerce, and wealth. Venice, the richest city in thirteenth-century Europe,<sup>3</sup> was full of trade and commercial activity but was almost as completely devoid of agriculture as England was of commerce. In spite of her unrivaled wealth, there was little culture in Venice. The city had a good public library, but little use was made of it. The Venetians made no contributions to learning; they were too involved in the pursuit of business and pleasure. Though there were numbers of schools all over Europe in the thirteenth century, records reveal that there were judges in fourteenth-century Venice who were unable to read.<sup>4</sup>

Genoa, which had been a bustling seaport in the days of the Empire,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 681.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 699.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 709.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 711.

valued commercial gain above creative activity in letters and art. Merchants, bankers, manufacturers, and politicians grew prosperous there. The Bank of Genoa was more powerful as a political institution than the state, gaining its governmental hold by lending money to the city. Records indicate that all holders of public office were required to swear an oath of loyalty to the Bank.<sup>1</sup>

Thirteenth-century Milan was a rich and powerful city of 200,000. Intensely proud of her liberty, she gained control of all of the commerce of the Po River.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the papacy, Rome was a very poor city. In sharp contrast to the busy commercial activity of Venice, Genoa, and Milan, Rome was a simple, almost rural hodgepodge of truck gardens, houses, and ruins. The rich still followed the old Roman custom of owning property in the country and living in the city. As a whole, Rome's contribution to the cultural growth of the age was meager.<sup>3</sup>

Florence was a busy center of trade and manufacturing and was particularly noted for her textiles.<sup>4</sup> Through shrewd and often malicious tactics several Florentine families, notably the Frescobaldi and the Medici, devel-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 713.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 714.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 706.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 728.

oped powerful banking firms whose control spread throughout Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Torn by internal political strife, Florence was Italy's most violent city. Constant class war and bloodshed marked the last half of the thirteenth century and the first decade of the fourteenth. Strangely enough these Florentines who lived, fought, and loved so furiously were the greatest poets, artists, and philosophers in all of Italy. The excitement must have provided the stimulus for their creative efforts. Dante was one of the products of this highly competitive atmosphere.<sup>2</sup>

#### Education

From the fall of the Roman Empire through the late Middle Ages, the Church was the guardian of both public and private education. All schools of any consequence, regardless of their size or status, were under the direct control of the Church with an ecclesiastical officer serving as schoolmaster.<sup>3</sup>

There were in medieval Europe three distinct social classes besides the nobility: Churchmen for religious life, soldiers for fighting, and peasants or craftsmen for work. There was an extremely hostile attitude on the part of the nobility and the educated clergy toward members of the laboring class who attempted to alter their station in life. The exclusive jealousy of the educated

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 729.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 731.

<sup>3</sup>G. G. Coulton, Medieval Panorama (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1938), p. 385.

class was exhibited in a petition which the English House of Commons in 1391 sent to Richard II (who, incidentally, rejected it). The petition requested that no bondman be permitted to send his sons to school. This feeling that knowledge in the hands of the common man was a dangerous thing was also instrumental in prohibiting the circulation of the Bible in the vernacular.<sup>1</sup>

As far as the education of girls is concerned, most convents had schools for this purpose that were similar to the monastic schools for boys. A few girls were admitted to cathedral schools,<sup>2</sup> and there are some instances in which girls attended the universities.<sup>3</sup>

Prior to 1100 the chief centers of learning were connected with monasteries, particularly because of the necessity of an elementary command of Latin for the reading of spiritual texts, the singing of services, and the copying of manuscripts. Since it was not infrequent that applicants for the order had received little or no training in the language, provisions had to be made for instruction in Latin. Often these monastic schools would educate the sons of local noblemen, even though these externs, as they were called, had no desire to become part of the order.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 389.

<sup>2</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 914.

<sup>3</sup>James J. Walsh, High Points of Medieval Culture (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1937), p. 92.

<sup>4</sup>Lowrie J. Daly, The Medieval University (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p. 6.



The cathedral schools were supervised by the bishop of the diocese. Their purpose, similar to that of theological seminaries of today, was the training of future priests.<sup>1</sup>

Another type of school, the song school, was sponsored by some cathedrals and parish churches for the purpose of teaching the choir boys to read Latin, but not necessarily to understand it. Although these song schools seldom, if ever, offered a curriculum comparable to that of the cathedral school, most of them felt obliged to offer the choir boys at least a minimum amount of instruction in grammar. Therefore the state of the song school was constantly fluctuating between that of a school of music and that of a grammar or preparatory school.<sup>2</sup>

The main subject offered by the ecclesiastical preparatory schools was grammar, which implied the study of Latin and not the vernacular. The grammar schools within close range of a prominent university usually restricted themselves to the study of grammar, though sometimes logic was added. Those preparatory schools located in remote areas frequently taught a complete course in logic and grammar, and sometimes covered the entire range of the liberal arts.<sup>3</sup>

The word university has no connection with the idea of universal knowl-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>2</sup>Crump and Jacob, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>3</sup>Hastings Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, ed. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936), III, 349.



edge. Furthermore there is no implication of the current idea that a university, by virtue of its name, should attempt to offer instruction in all branches of knowledge, regardless of their innate value. It simply came from the Latin word universitas meaning a guild or a group of persons united for a particular purpose.<sup>1</sup>

To attempt to give a specific date for the founding of the earliest medieval universities is unreasonable. Many of them, like the University of Paris, were not founded, but just grew naturally.<sup>2</sup>

At any university the seven liberal arts, so called because they were considered appropriate to the study of free men (liberi) as compared to men of a lower social status, constituted the basic course of study comparable to undergraduate training in a university of today.<sup>3</sup> The seven liberal arts were further subdivided into the trivium of grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic, and the quadrivium consisting of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.<sup>4</sup>

As to the content of the various subject areas, grammar meant the study of the Latin language, and it included the study of literature as well as the art of speaking and writing effectively. Rhetoric was the study of public speaking and letter-writing. Dialectic was the study and development of the

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<sup>1</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 394.

<sup>2</sup>Haskins, op. cit., p. 382.

<sup>3</sup>Crump and Jacob, op. cit., p. 271.

<sup>4</sup>Daly, op. cit., p. 8.

reasoning process, similar to today's courses in logic. Arithmetic involved only simple mathematical problems, all of which were done with the use of Roman rather than Arabic numerals.<sup>1</sup> It was not until around the twelfth century that the zero was brought from Arabia so that it and the nine integers began to replace the Roman numerals.<sup>2</sup> Geometry concerned the student with geography and surveying. Modern geometry came into the schools in the twelfth century with the translation of Arabic books into Latin. Astronomy was, of course, the study of the stars. Music, the last of the seven, was considered from a mathematical and theoretical point of view rather than from the aesthetic standpoint.<sup>3</sup> The professional studies of divinity, medicine, and law, which were more like three graduate departments, could be commenced only after a foundation of seven years of study in the liberal arts had been acquired.<sup>4</sup>

The first medieval universities and their special fields of study were: Salerno, Italy (medicine),<sup>5</sup> Bologna, Italy (law), and Paris (philosophy and theology). It is interesting to note that this progression coincides exactly with the way man thinks. His first interest is in the welfare of his own body, his second is in his possessions, while his final thoughts are reserved for the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Crump and Jacob, op. cit., p. 273.

<sup>3</sup>Daly, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

<sup>4</sup>Crump and Jacob, op. cit., p. 271.

<sup>5</sup>The institution at Salerno was, strictly speaking, not a university but rather a professional school. See p. 39.

hereafter and his relationship with God.<sup>1</sup>

The medieval university was not a building or a group of buildings--it was an organization.<sup>2</sup> Halls and private dwellings were rented for lecturing and for lodging purposes. The very fact that the medieval university had no permanent buildings was a point very much in its favor. In the case of the Town and Gown disputes, the university reserved the right to suspend its lectures and to transplant the hundreds (or even thousands) of students and teachers to another locality. Since such a mass departure meant tremendous financial loss to a medieval town, the masters found in this right of cessatio the most powerful weapon that the university possessed.<sup>3</sup>

Since there were no dormitory facilities, it was the student's responsibility to procure his own lodging, which sometimes produced an adverse effect on his financial as well as his moral condition. This problem was alleviated to some extent when individual teachers set up boarding houses for their own students and when charitable sources began to operate rooming houses for the very poor.<sup>4</sup>

The vast majority of students at medieval universities were from the middle class. It had not yet become fashionable for the upper class to be

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<sup>1</sup>Walsh, High Points of Medieval Culture, p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>Daly, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 168-69.

<sup>4</sup>Crump and Jacob, op. cit., p. 259.

educated, and the rich were often too occupied in warfare or some other entertainment to pursue an education. In fact, working one's way through school was more common then than it is now.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, it was not considered a disgrace for a student to support himself by begging for alms.<sup>2</sup>

The only entrance requirement for the beginning university student was a reading and speaking knowledge of Latin, which was supposed to be the sole language spoken by the student, whether at work or relaxing.<sup>3</sup> The average age of the entering student was approximately that of a sophomore in today's high school.<sup>4</sup>

It has been estimated that there were eighty universities in Europe at the close of the Middle Ages.<sup>5</sup> As to the number of students in these universities, in the thirteenth century there were estimated to be more than five thousand at Oxford and over twenty thousand at Paris.<sup>6</sup> Since many of the students were attending universities far from their homes, they found it profitable from the standpoint of mutual protection to band together into leagues or guilds

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<sup>1</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>3</sup>Daly, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Homer Haskins, The Rise of Universities (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1923), p. 21.

<sup>6</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 68.

which were called nations.<sup>1</sup>

The academic progression of the medieval university student was similar to that of a young apprentice. As the apprentice moved to journeyman and finally to master draftsman, so did the intellectual apprentice become a teaching fellow and then a university master or doctor.<sup>2</sup>

The acute shortage of books and the frequency of errors in translation prompted medieval teachers to use oral methods of teaching. Even when the book shortage no longer presented a problem, this method of teaching remained constant for a startling number of centuries.<sup>3</sup> Because of the lecture method and the absence of student texts, the pupil had to do much rote-learning, and his memory had to have a much greater power of retention than is required of the twentieth-century student. Disputation or arguing was another favored approach to teaching, and it was still being utilized extensively at the time of the founding of the first American colleges.<sup>4</sup>

Disciplinary action was quite severe with flogging considered the natural accompaniment to learning. This was true from the grammar school to the university level. Certain instances that have come down through the centuries substantiate the need for such discipline, in particular the case of the

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<sup>1</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 395.

<sup>2</sup>Daly, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>3</sup>Crump and Jacob, op. cit., p. 278.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 279.

great philosopher John the Scot, who was slain at Malmesbury Abbey by the pens of his pupils.<sup>1</sup> England's Winchester School had this advice for its students: Aut disce aut discede; manet sors tertia caedi - Learn or depart; a third alternative is to be flogged.<sup>2</sup>

Frequently students attended several universities before completing their work, a practice which was often encouraged.<sup>3</sup> The medieval universities anticipated the modern exchange program in giving professors a leave of absence to be used in teaching at a university in another country.<sup>4</sup>

The medieval university was the first institution to confer a degree upon the successful completion of a course of study. The license to teach was the first formal academic degree, and the titles master and doctor have been used since that time. The candidate for a degree was required to give a sample lecture which marked the beginning of the modern commencement exercises, the name coming from the act of commencing to teach.<sup>5</sup>

#### Music in the Universities

Since music was a part of the quadrivium, every university student was required to study it as a part of his training in the seven liberal arts, but this

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<sup>1</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 387.

<sup>2</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 915.

<sup>3</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>5</sup>Haskins, The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century, p. 370.



study stressed the philosophical and mathematical aspects of music instead of the study and practice of music as a living art. Thus was continued the trend begun by the ancient Greeks and nurtured through the Middle Ages: the distinct division between musica speculativa (the theoretical aspect) and musica practica (the aesthetic aspect).<sup>1</sup>

Usually the university master would teach his students through the entire gamut of the quadrivium. Therefore all of these subjects, including music, had to be mastered, and a failure in any one of them would prevent the awarding of the license to teach. This accounts for the fact that so many early musical theorists were also important mathematicians and astronomers.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning music's philosophical connotations, from the time of Augustine it was considered one of the disciplines essential for an adequate understanding of the scriptures. Several of the universities that were strong in medical studies included the study of music with that of medicine. Plato championed the idea of the close connection between music and bodily health.<sup>3</sup>

The University of Paris, which was closely connected with Notre Dame Cathedral, considered not only musica speculativa, but also the artistic side of musical performance. Notre Dame's song school served as a preparatory school for the university. It has not been ascertained, but it is thought that

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<sup>1</sup>Nan Cooke Carpenter, Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 123.



Leonin and Perotin gave musical instruction in the name of the university.<sup>1</sup>

Although music never completely shed its philosophical attributes, it began to be considered as a separate art by the end of the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> Degrees in music were given in England at least by the fifteenth century, though probably much earlier.<sup>3</sup>

The regular study of music was supplemented by the use of music in connection with certain university functions. In the celebration of Masses, in the observance of feast days, and in the enactment of academic ceremonies music was used.<sup>4</sup>

As it is with today's students, the medieval student made informal music a part of his life. In fact dancing, singing, and the playing of instruments were often pursued so diligently that occasionally a university would adopt a rule prohibiting these practices as constituting an unwise use of time needed for study.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 115-16.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 116.



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PORTE DE L'AUDE, CARCASSONNE  
XII—XIII CENT.

## CHAPTER II

### THE VISUAL AND LITERARY ARTS

#### Cathedrals

Nowhere can a more profound expression of the medieval religious feeling be found than in the Gothic cathedrals. No other age could have possessed the motivation or the physical and artistic energy necessary to make these monuments a reality. But to the modern observer these cathedrals are more than mere monuments, for in them one may come face to face with the true Gothic spirit.

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a phenomenal wave of cathedral construction spread over Western Europe. The dynamic religious faith which motivated these architectural endeavors came about as the result of a blinding fear that gripped the minds of eleventh-century Christians.

The first three decades of the eleventh century were full of terror and uncertainties. It was believed that an angel had condemned Satan to be held in a bottomless pit for a thousand years, but no one was certain whether the thousand years began with the date of Christ's birth or His death. From 1030 to 1032 the seasons seemed to reverse themselves, resulting in almost total crop failure and terrible famines that plagued all of Western Europe. The general consensus of opinion was that the world was coming to an

end.<sup>1</sup> When prosperity returned in 1033, it was accompanied by a surging faith that produced the Crusades, the establishment of the cult of Mary, and the great Gothic cathedrals. This faith cannot be explained, nor can it be dismissed by terming it something that happened naturally.

The simple medieval mind demanded as a basis for this compelling faith an object capable of commanding a man's unlimited devotion. Perhaps the mental pictures of the Father and the Son were too awful and that of the Holy Ghost too vague for his childlike mind to grasp. The logical object through which the Trinity could best be approached was Mary, for she was a human being. This ecstatic worship of the Blessed Virgin mushroomed because of the persuasive power she supposedly held over the Trinity. All over Europe, and particularly in France, cathedrals sprang up in her honor.

A monastic church might be built in any locality, but a cathedral was the chair of the bishop and could be erected only in a town in which the bishop resided. It was located in the center of the town, in both the geographical and the figurative senses.<sup>2</sup> The cathedral was to the citizens of the town much more than simply a place of worship; it was a complete way of life. In some instances it served as an auditorium with town meetings being held in the nave. Its priceless representations in stone and glass made it a gallery of art. The

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<sup>1</sup>Sydney Clark, Today in Cathedral France (2d ed. rev.; New York: R. M. McBride, 1948), pp. 3-5.

<sup>2</sup>Fleming, op. cit., p. 225.

porches served as theaters for the presentation of mystery plays and for performances by wandering musicians. In the cathedral school young boys of the town learned to read and write, and fugitives from the law found sanctuary within the walls of the great church.

Even though only the skilled workmen took part in the actual construction, the entire citizenry was actively involved in the building process. It was an anonymous master-builder or master-mason who supervised the undertaking, for the term architect was not used until the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup>

Funds were solicited from the surrounding countryside, and the people contributed eagerly in a manner that has never been surpassed since that time. The guilds gave freely of their products, and the poor labored without pay for the sustenance of the great church. Though some persons gave of their possessions solely for the purpose of buying their salvation, many others gave purely because of their profound faith.

A medieval observer had this to say about the spirit that was prevalent among the citizens of Chartres during the building of their cathedral:

Who has ever seen!--Who has ever heard tell, in times past, that powerful princes of the world, that men brought up in honour and in wealth, that nobles, men and women, have bent their proud and haughty necks to the harness of carts, and that, like beasts of burden, they have dragged to the abode of Christ these waggons, loaded with wines, grains, oil, stone, wood, and all that is necessary for the wants of life, or for the construction of the Church?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 864.

<sup>2</sup>Henry Adams, Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1933), p. 111.

The citizens took great pride in their cathedral, for the town's importance often was determined by the size and height of the cathedral and the importance of the relics it contained. Public sentiment demanded that each new cathedral rise above those of the neighboring towns. The nave of Chartres measured one hundred twenty-two feet in height, and that of Amiens rose to one hundred forty-seven. Finally the cathedral of Beauvais reached a towering one hundred fifty-seven feet, but it collapsed soon after its completion. Two additional attempts by the citizens of Beauvais met with the same fate, so the cathedral today is composed of the apse and the choir, but no nave.<sup>1</sup> (See PLATES II and III.)

What is known today as Gothic architecture evolved naturally from the tenth and eleventh-century Romanesque style which was used extensively in Southern Europe, particularly in Italy. Characterized by low, rounded arches, heavy, thickly-set columns, and massive walls pierced occasionally by small windows, churches built in the Romanesque era were often filled with a pensive, gloomy atmosphere. When this style found its way to the northern countries of Europe, it was totally unsatisfactory. The dark, cold climate of the North demanded a style that would admit more of the natural light and warmth of the sun. Walls became higher and windows larger and more numerous until the interior was bathed in a flood of light. (See PLATES IV and V.)

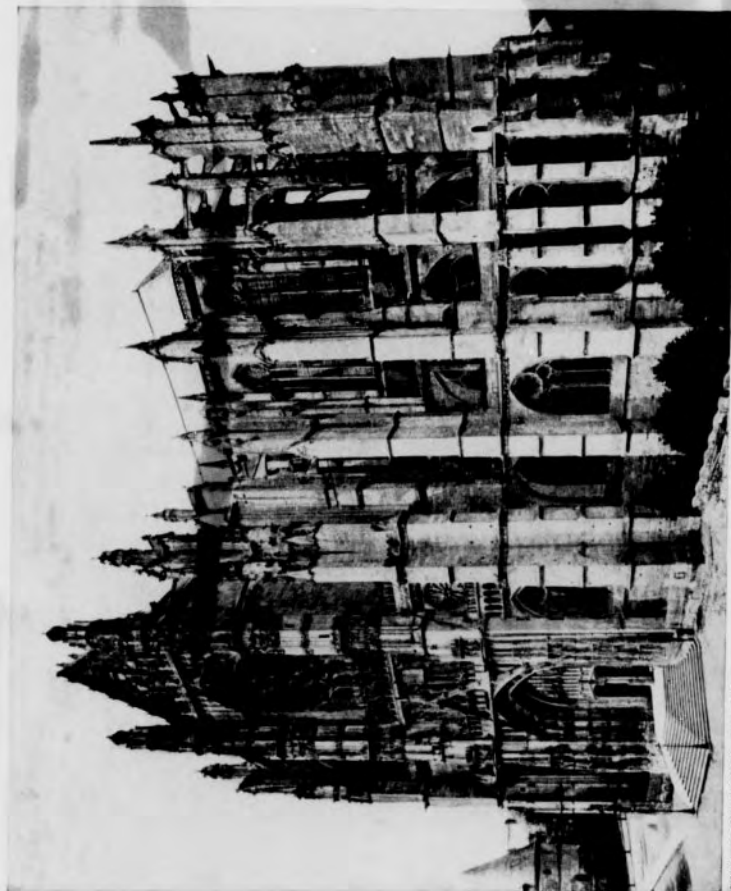
The word Gothic was an uncomplimentary term applied to this art by

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<sup>1</sup>Fleming, op. cit., p. 257.



G 256



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VIEW FROM SOUTHEAST. CATHEDRAL, BEAUVAIS  
GOTHIC. CHOIR 1227—1272, REBUILT 1284—1325, TRANSEPT XVI CENT.

## PLATE II

G 257



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

CHOIR. CATHEDRAL, BEAUVAIS  
GOTHIC. 1227—1272. REBUILT 1284—1325

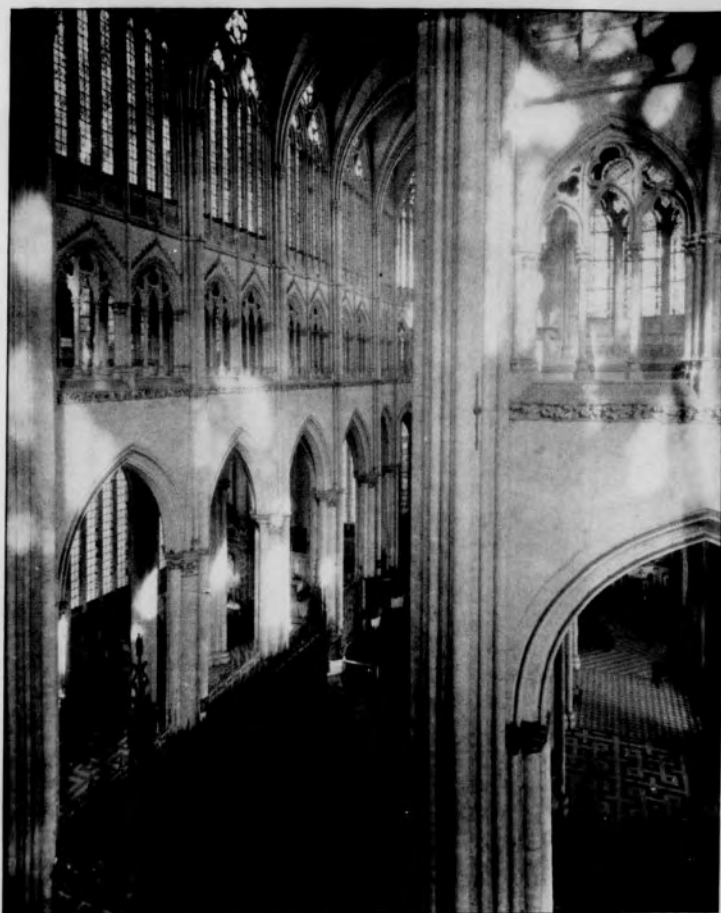
G 327



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

NAVE, LOOKING EAST. CHURCH, VIGNORY  
ROMANESQUE. c. 1030—1045

G 253



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CHOIR FROM TRIFORIUM. CATHEDRAL, AMIENS  
GOTHIC. NAVE BEGUN 1220, CHOIR FINISHED 1269

PLATE V

the men of the Renaissance. Because the style lacked the harmonious feeling of that of the Greeks and Romans, Renaissance man looked upon it as being barbaric. He found it comparable to the nature of the uncultured Goths of the very early Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup>

France was the mother of the Gothic style, and from there its influence spread to England, Germany, and other parts of Europe. The twelfth century was the beginning of a gradual unfolding of the new style. The cathedrals of Chartres and Notre Dame at Paris are products of the Early Gothic builders. The High Gothic cathedrals at Rheims, Amiens, and Beauvais were built in the thirteenth century, the most productive years of the era. In the wake of the tremendous building activity of the preceding hundred years, the fourteenth century was spent in finishing those cathedrals that were already begun.<sup>2</sup>

The ground plan of the Gothic cathedral follows the shape of a Latin cross. The most important part of the structure is the high altar which is located in the apse, or the extreme head of the cross. Behind the apse some cathedrals have apsidial chapels dedicated to various saints. In almost all cases the apse faces Jerusalem to the east. Between the apse and the transepts, or horizontal arms of the cross figure, is the choir in which the clergy and the choir are seated. The remainder, and the largest, part of the church is the

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<sup>1</sup>Walsh, High Points of Medieval Culture, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Donald Culross Peattie, "Glory in Stone," American Heritage, VII (December, 1955), 6.

nave, which is occupied by the congregation of laymen. (See PLATE VI.)

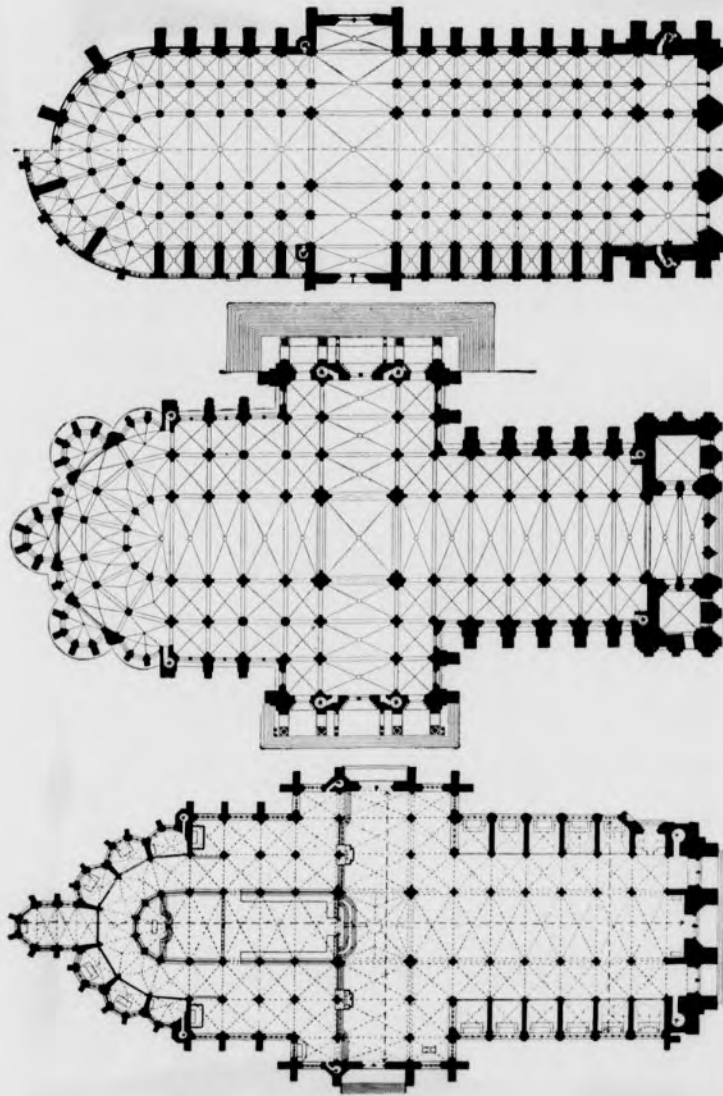
A single aisle extends the length of the nave, leading directly into the apse, and around the sides of the church is a covered walkway, the ambulatory, which is used for ceremonial processions. The triforium, or gallery, corresponds to a balcony and is located on either side of the nave above the ambulatory. Above the triforium in what might be called the upper story of both the nave and the choir is the clerestory (also spelled clearstory) which contains the windows, and rising above this is the ceiling, the vault of stone. Ribbed vaulting was a Gothic innovation in which the ribs, which are similar to the staves in an umbrella, stand out in relief. As a protection against the weather, the vault is covered with an exterior roof of wood or masonry.

A cathedral has three porches: the north, the south, and the west, the last being the most important. On each porch are from three to five doorways called portals, which are decorated with exquisite stone carvings. The west façade is further distinguished by the presence of a large tower on both of its sides. The towers of some cathedrals are topped with spires that add to the grace and majesty of the structure, but many, notably Notre Dame at Paris, Rheims, and Amiens, have none, their spires either having been destroyed or never having been built in the first place. (See PLATES VII and VIII.)

The miracle of the Gothic cathedral is in its structural stability. No concrete and no steel were used, yet these structures have withstood over six centuries of weather and war. The secret lies not in the mortar with which the stones are separated, but in the mathematical precision with which they



G 330



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

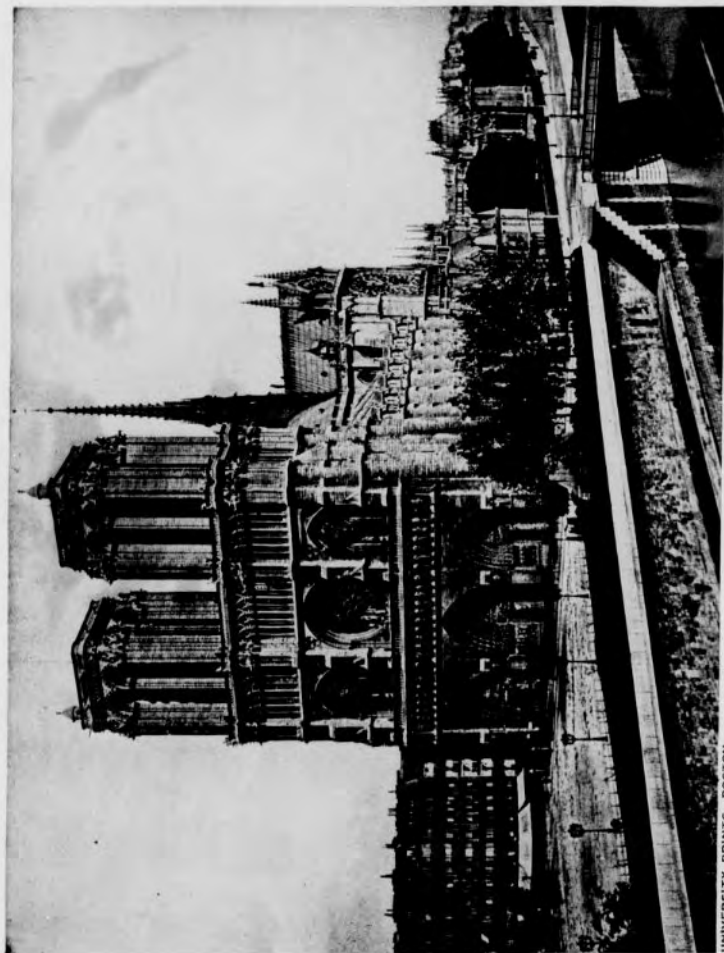
AMIENS. BEGUN 1220  
PLANS OF FRENCH CATHEDRALS

CHARTRES. BEGUN 1194

PARIS. BEGUN 1163  
CHAPELS ADDED (ALL AROUND  
THE BUILDING) c. 1300

PLATE VI

MG 1



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VIEW FROM SOUTHWEST. CATHEDRAL (NOTRE DAME), PARIS  
GOTHIC. C. 1200—1245

PLATE VII

G 294



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WEST END. CATHEDRAL, REIMS  
GOTHIC. 1212-1290 AND XV CENT.

are balanced.

The strong, thick stone walls of the Romanesque cathedral were quite able to support the weight of the heavy vault, but the Gothic builder created for himself a serious problem when he weakened the outside walls by inserting tremendous expanses of glass in his efforts to admit the maximum amount of light. In addition to this, the walls were being built much higher. As a result, the outward thrust of the stone vault upon these walls would be great enough to cause the structure to crumble. If he could transform the direction of the thrust from an outward one to one that was vertical, the balance could be retained. His solution was in the use of the flying buttress, which soon became a distinguishing decorative feature of the exterior of the Gothic cathedral. It supplies a counter thrust from the opposite side of the wall so that the weight of the vault is carried directly to the ground. (See PLATE II, page 57.)

When the modern tourist stands before one of the great cathedrals, he does not see it as it appeared in the Middle Ages. Upon its completion the cathedral's exterior was painted either white or ochre and was further decorated with bright colors. Through the years the color has been gradually worn away by the weather so that one now sees only the natural gray of the stones.<sup>1</sup>

If there is one church in all of France that can rightfully be called the chosen house of Mary, that one is the great cathedral at Chartres. The spot

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<sup>1</sup>Crump and Jacob, op. cit., p. 83.

on which the cathedral stands had been a place of worship since early pagan times. It was here that the ancient Druids built an altar with a statue of the "Virgin Who Shall Bear a Son." It has been suggested by some authorities that Isaiah's prophesy had reached the Druids as well as the Hebrews; other sources suggest that this is just another example of a pagan statue of an unknown god.<sup>1</sup> In the eleventh century the original statue was burned, but a replica now rests in the cathedral's crypt. It is interesting to note that the Virgin's eyes are closed, while those of the Baby are open. This supposedly reflected the Druid priests' idea of the old faith in darkness which was brought into light by the birth of the Child.<sup>2</sup>

The most prized relic housed here is the veil worn by the Virgin at the time of the annunciation, and it was the desire to give this relic an appropriate resting place that inspired the citizens of the small town to build their great church. The veil came to the West in 876 as a gift from the Byzantine Emperor Constantine to Charlemagne, whose grandson, Charles the Bald, gave it to Chartres.<sup>3</sup>

It is impossible to appreciate Chartres in its intended glory without an understanding of the medieval attitude toward the Virgin. Mary had always been held in high regard by the Western Church, but at the time of the Crusades

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<sup>1</sup>Cited in Clark, Today in Cathedral France, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

she began to be honored above the Trinity itself. Had it been left to the Church fathers, they probably would have left Mary as an example of worthy humility, but because of the demand of the people, she was crowned Queen of Heaven. In her high position as Mother of God she was pictured as the guardian of the Trinity.

In the eyes of the medieval Christian, the blackest sinner who gave Mary his loyalty was likely to fare far better in the hereafter than the pious bishop whose only sin was in neglecting her. Medieval folklore is full of tales in which the Virgin interceded on behalf of her chosen sinner. There is the popular story of the criminal who was hanged in the town square, but who had been foresighted enough to win Mary's favor. The townspeople swore that they saw her arms supporting him for three days and nights. Since she willed that he should live, he was cut down and set free.<sup>1</sup> Naturally the ranks of the clergy accorded the Virgin their uninhibited devotion. The rich spent millions trying to gain her favor, but those who honored her most sincerely were the warriors. Even though there is hardly a less likely place where the gentle Mary might be expected to be present than on a battlefield, for years she rode into battle, often leading both sides.

All classes of society, from the richest to the poorest, gave freely of their money because of their belief that the Virgin would return it to them with interest in the form of eternal life. Statistics indicate that in France alone

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 6.



between the years 1170 and 1270, eighty cathedrals and almost five hundred churches of cathedral stature were built. It was estimated in 1840 that the replacement of these structures would have cost more than five thousand million francs or a thousand million dollars.<sup>1</sup> Since this estimate covers only one hundred years of the era, consider the total expenditure of the entire Gothic period. From another standpoint, compare the buying power of a thousand million dollars in 1840 with that of the same amount today.

Since Chartres was to be the throne of Mary, it was natural for her to influence its construction. According to medieval records she stood by during the entire building process guiding the pen of the architect and the hammers of masons and sculptors. Even as feudal ladies desired their great castles to be beautiful, so did Mary demand the same for Chartres. She would have nothing to do with the gloomy, ponderous Romanesque style; she called for light and spaciousness. (See PLATE IX.) It was she who prescribed the use of the graceful pointed arch rather than the heavy, rounded Romanesque arch. The narrow windows of the old style gave way to larger areas of glass. Of particular beauty is the extraordinary western rose window which is positioned parallel to the apse. The rose, being the symbol of the Virgin, was placed so that Mary might view it clearly from her throne.<sup>2</sup> (See PLATE X.)

In answer to the Virgin's desire for space, the walls of the nave grew

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<sup>1</sup>Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 100

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 125.

G 272



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NAVE, LOOKING EAST. CATHEDRAL, CHARTRES  
GOTHIC. 1194—1260

G 273



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

CHOIR AND NAVE, LOOKING WEST. CATHEDRAL, CHARTRES  
GOTHIC. 1194—1250

PLATE X

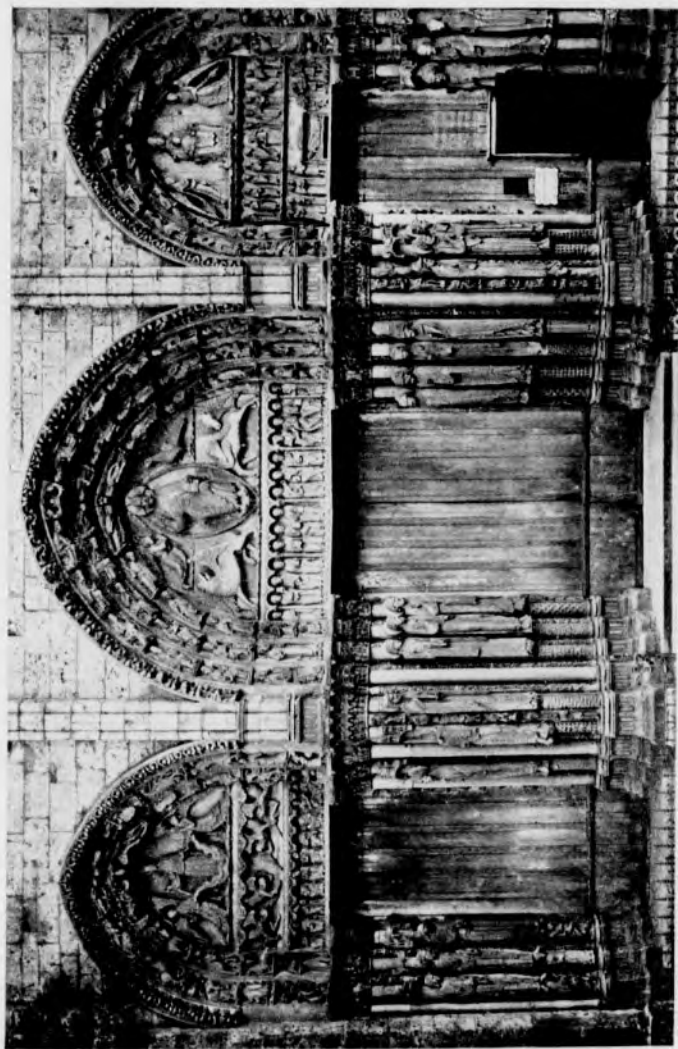
G 269



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

WEST END. CATHEDRAL, CHARTRES  
GOTHIC. OLDER PARTS c. 1135-45 AND c. 1200;  
SOUTH TOWER FINISHED c. 1180; NORTH TOWER FINISHED 1507-13  
ARCHITECT. JEAN DE BEAUCE

G 270



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

WEST PORTAL. CATHEDRAL, CHARTRES  
EARLY GOTHIC. C. 1145

PLATE XII

pilgrimage to Jerusalem, a one-thousand-foot network of white lines painted on the stone floor in the center of the nave. Many are the believers who have followed the course of this maze, crawling over the rough stones on their bare knees.<sup>1</sup>

Chartres alone, of all the cathedrals in France, remains unscarred by wars, the Revolution, and renovations of later periods. The revolutionists planned to pull down the great church, but the citizens of the town did not want debris cluttering their property, and it was too expensive to haul it away.<sup>2</sup> So Chartres stands today--the most visited cathedral in France.<sup>3</sup>

The element of mystery always fascinated the mind of medieval man. As children are wont to do, he invented fantastic stories which he quite honestly accepted as being the truth. One of the most interesting of these concerns the building of the Cathedral of Cologne in Germany. (See PLATE XIII.)

It was on a sunny day in tenth-century Germany that an architect was sitting on the bank of a river. He was trying desperately to derive a plan that would make the Cathedral of Cologne the most beautiful and the most majestic in all of Germany. Suddenly his musings were interrupted by an old man who came and sat beside him. With an air of mockery the man drew some lines in the sand and quickly erased them. Those lines, the artist knew

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<sup>1</sup>Clark, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 38.



G 483



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WEST END. CATHEDRAL, COLOGNE  
GOTHIC. XIII-XIX CENT. TOWERS FINISHED 1880

immediately, formed the plan of the cathedral he wanted to create. The old man was really Satan in disguise who offered to give the architect the plans that would guarantee him fame and glory--in exchange for his soul. With this bargain in mind, the architect went to see his confessor, and together they schemed to outwit Satan. At the appointed time the architect met the old man, ostensibly to purchase the plans. As Satan handed him the papers, the architect flashed before him a piece of the True Cross which the confessor had given him. Before such a holy thing Satan is powerless, so he shrank back in defeat. As he disappeared he proclaimed that even though the architect had the plans, his work would never be completed, and his name would remain unknown. The Cathedral of Cologne was finally completed in 1880, but the architect remains anonymous.<sup>1</sup>

### Sculpture

Gothic sculpture is an integral part of the building: it is rigorously kept in the place which architecture reserves for it, but at the same time it brings to life the lines and surfaces of that architecture. It is no uneven partnership, but an understanding in which each serves the other, and Gothic art owes much of its charm to the constant fusion of the plastic and the monumental.<sup>2</sup>

On the exterior of the Gothic cathedral, statues and carvings are found almost everywhere. The subjects represented in stone always depict strong

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<sup>1</sup>Esther Singleton (ed. and tr.), Turrets, Towers, and Temples (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1898), pp. 117-19.

<sup>2</sup>Bony, op. cit., p. 16.

theological beliefs, but this does not imply that all of the scenes and characters are taken from the Bible. Because of the prevalent interest in the works of men leading to their eventual salvation or destruction, one may find representations of secular subjects and of scenes from daily life. In all cases the topics were selected by theologians, and the interpretation was governed by public acceptance rather than being the personal invention of the artist.<sup>1</sup>

The Gothic Cathedral is a perfect encyclopedia of human knowledge. It contains scenes from the Scriptures and the legends of saints; motives from the animal and vegetable kingdom; representations of the seasons of agricultural labor, of the arts and sciences and crafts, and finally moral allegories, as, for instance, ingenious personifications of the virtues and the vices.<sup>2</sup>

At first the early Christian Church was reluctant to sanction the use of statuary to decorate a place of worship, for it was too closely akin to the forbidden graven image. Mosaic designs and decorative painting were the chosen media rather than sculpture.<sup>3</sup>

The churches of France did not employ statues as a part of their decorative scheme until the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries.<sup>4</sup> The figures of this period were rude and awkward, truly showing evidence that plastic art was very young in the Romanesque era and totally

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<sup>1</sup>Erwin O. Christensen, The History of Western Art, (New York: The New American Library, 1959), p. 188.

<sup>2</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 166.

<sup>3</sup>Crump and Jacob, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

uninfluenced by the masterpieces of classic Greek and Roman sculpture.

The Old Testament figures of the west portal of Chartres are typical examples of early Gothic work (c. 1150). (See PLATE XIV.) The human form was used to adorn the column, and in no way was it permitted to obstruct the columnar effect. As a result the elongated figures stand rigidly erect with the long lines of drapery predominantly vertical.<sup>1</sup> Although they might seem stiff and stilted according to modern standards, still their limited gestures and details of facial expression and placement show a warm, artistic feeling that belies the fact that a scant half-century before only the clumsiest attempts had been carved in stone.

The north and south portals of Chartres were constructed over one hundred years after the west porch. The statues of the latter period, as represented by St. Theodore of the south porch in PLATE XV, begin to show evidences of physical structure beneath the drapery. Body weight seems to be resting on the feet, and occasionally there will be a tendency to turn the body or the head. This marked the sculptor's inclination away from the conventional and toward the naturalistic. Although the sculpture of the early thirteenth century still retained some of its columnar qualities, it had begun to show a spark of individuality that prevented it from being subordinated completely to architectural demands.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Helen Gardner, Art Through the Ages (3rd ed.; New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1948), p. 343.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 346.

K 57



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FIGURES FROM CENTRAL PORTAL, WEST FRONT  
CATHEDRAL, CHARTRES  
FRENCH GOTHIC. MIDDLE OF XII CENT.

K 76



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

ST. THEODORE  
SOUTH PORCH, CATHEDRAL, CHARTRES  
FRENCH GOTHIC. XIII CENT.



During the latter half of the thirteenth century, sculpture began to reflect more animation in its bent toward realism. In the middle frieze of The Last Judgment on the central portal at Bourges (see PLATES XVI and XVII), St. Michael is shown holding the scale for the weighing of good and bad deeds. By his side stands Satan, with a look of inhuman ugliness. Each devil has a human face on his stomach to signify that ". . . the seat of intelligence had been placed in the service of the lesser instincts."<sup>1</sup> At one side a monster shooting flame and smoke from his mouth represents the jaws of hell, and at the opposite end of the frieze the righteous souls are taken to the lap of Abraham. The top frieze pictures Christ enthroned in judgment.

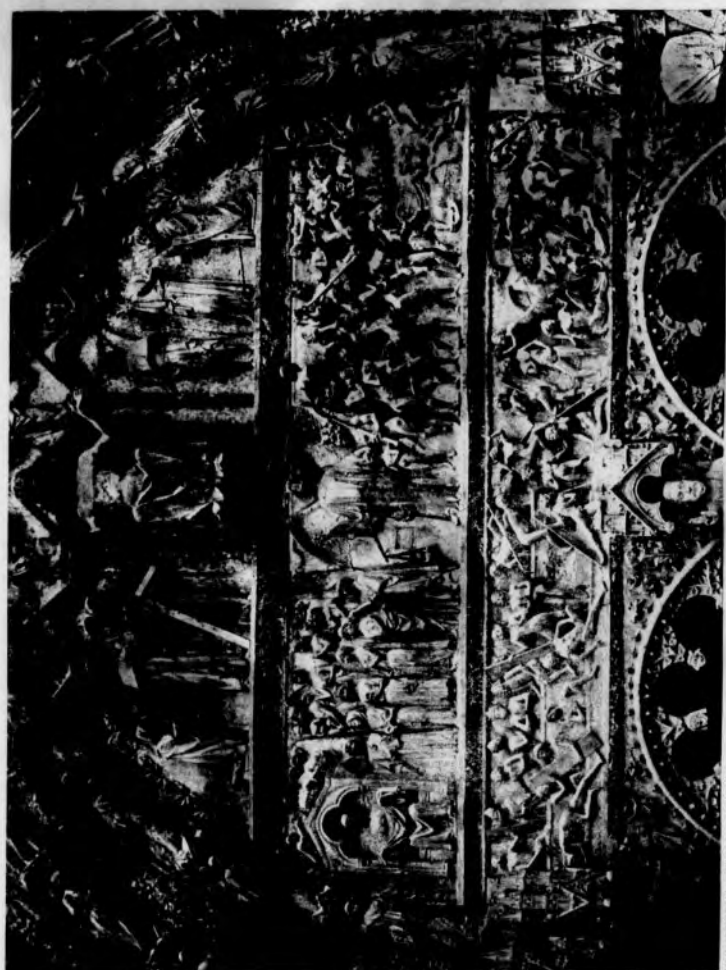
It is a generally accepted thought that the Italian Renaissance rescued culture from the oblivion brought on by barbarians from the North. The figures of Mary and Elizabeth in the Visitation of Reims (see PLATE XVIII) show a thirteenth-century attempt at imitation of the classic style. Evidence of this is seen in the aged face of Elizabeth, the full face of the Virgin, the relaxed postures of both of the figures, and the toga-like garments that fall in a multitude of tiny folds.<sup>2</sup>

Figures from the latter half of the thirteenth century show even more action and individuality, as seen in the Madonna of the south transept of Amiens

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<sup>1</sup>Christensen, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>Lincoln Rothschild, Sculpture Through the Ages (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1942), p. 112.



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TYMPANUM: THE LAST JUDGMENT  
CENTRAL PORTAL, CATHEDRAL, BOURGES

FRENCH GOTHIC, SECOND HALF OF XIII CENT.

PLATE XVI

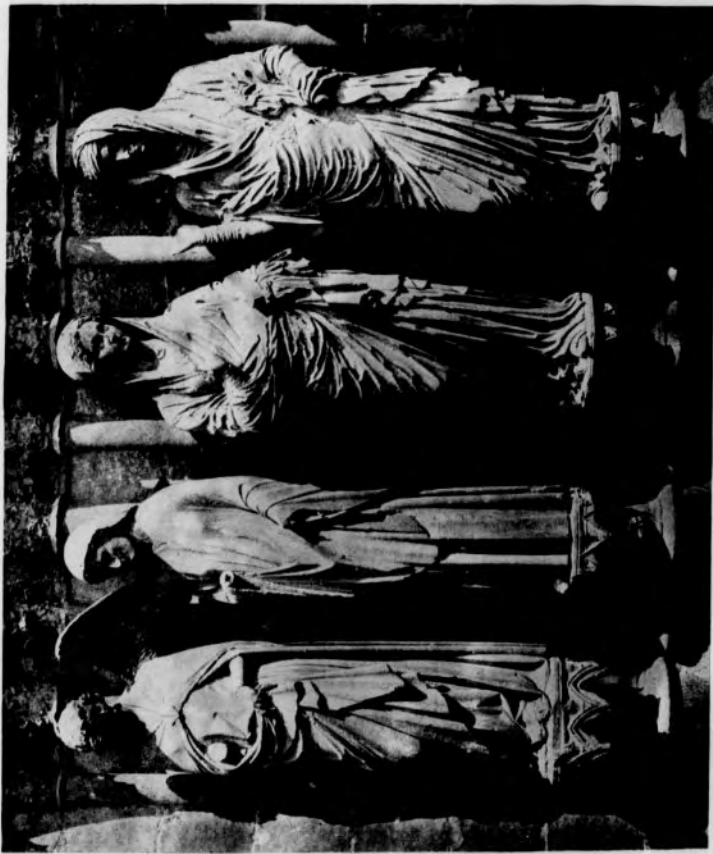
K 87



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

HEAVEN: ABRAHAM'S BOSOM: WEIGHING OF SOULS  
 CENTRAL PORTAL, CATHEDRAL, BOURGES  
 FRENCH GOTHIC. SECOND HALF OF XIII CENT.

K 82



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

ANNUNCIATION AND VISITATION. FAÇADE, CATHEDRAL, REIMS  
FRENCH GOTHIC. SECOND HALF OF XIII CENT.

PLATE XVIII

(see PLATE XIX). The smiling Virgin, crowned Queen of Heaven, turns toward her Child, who holds a sphere as the emblem of His sovereignty. The slightly curving posture of the Virgin became a characteristic of fourteenth-century figures.<sup>1</sup>

Sculpture of the fourteenth century detached itself from the cathedral's structure and became more realistic, as in the statues of Charles V and his wife Jeanne de Bourbon (see PLATE XX). Charles, who recovered his kingdom from England, was a shrewd diplomat and a patron of the arts. He is shown with a slightly stooped posture, a long nose, and an expression that might be called one of sly craftiness.<sup>2</sup>

It seems that the birds and beasts that are part of the menagerie on the exterior structure of Notre Dame at Paris have little connection with a place of worship. Some of them serve as water spouts to aid in the drainage of the roof, while others do nothing but sit complacently and stare over Paris. (See PLATE XXI.) Although some scholars have gone to great lengths to attach theological symbolism to these hideous creatures, it is far more logical to assume that the sculptor carved them because he enjoyed doing it. Fashioning these little monsters might indeed have tickled the fancy of the child-like medieval artist.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Christensen, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>3</sup>Clark, op. cit., pp. 27-29.

K 161



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

THE VIRGIN (TRUMEAU OF PORTAL)  
PORTAL OF VIERGE DORÉE, CATHEDRAL, AMIENS  
FRENCH GOTHIC. SECOND HALF OF XIII CENT.



K 201



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PHOTO. ALINARI

CHARLES V AND JEANNE DE BOURBON  
FROM PORTAL OF CHURCH OF THE CELESTINS, PARIS  
LOUVRE, PARIS

FRENCH GOTHIC. c. 1375

K 62



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

TWO GROTESQUES. NOTRE DAME, PARIS  
FRENCH GOTHIC. STYLE OF XIII CENT.

### Stained Glass Windows

There were at least four reasons for the use of stained glass in the Gothic cathedral. The first, and most obvious, was to fill the window space. Second, it offered an effective means of instruction. Scenes from the Bible and from the lives of the saints were constantly in view, making it possible for the illiterate populace to comprehend the Biblical messages quite easily. The third reason is purely aesthetic: the stained glass window is a thing of great beauty. Finally, its ultimate result was to elevate the spirit.

The medieval craftsman used only a few simple colors, but he fashioned them into windows that have retained their beauty for centuries. He was particularly fond of blue, which was revered as the Virgin's color, being symbolic of purity. Modern glass-makers marvel at the effect that was achieved, for blue is the color that is the most difficult to make fade-proof today.<sup>1</sup>

The art of working in glass involves a definite knowledge of the action of light upon color. The medieval glass-worker knew that red tended to give the impression of a ragged edge, while blue seemed to spread itself over the differently colored areas adjacent to it. At a distance the effect produced is that of an over-all blue tonality. To obtain a rich purple the artist placed tiny bits of red and blue glass side by side, allowing the eye of the observer to fuse the two colors.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Walsh, High Points of Medieval Culture, p. 77.

<sup>2</sup>Gardner, Art Through the Ages, 3rd ed., p. 347.

As the first step in fashioning a window, the glass-worker drew a full scale design of the window and indicated with heavy, black lines the placement of the iron bars needed to hold the window firmly in place. These bars, which enabled the large area of glass to endure the force of storms, were carefully placed in order that they might contribute favorably to the total effect of the design. When this was done, the artist began to reconstruct his design in glass. At his disposal were large sheets of glass which had been colored by having metal added while the glass was in a molten state. From these sheets small pieces of glass were cut in the shapes needed to fit the design, and they were held in place with strips of pliable lead.<sup>1</sup> Facial features and other details, including shadows, were painted in gray tints, making them visible from a distance.<sup>2</sup>

Twelfth and thirteenth-century windows employed almost exclusively a two-dimensional approach to pictorial representation, perhaps for the reason that anything but a flat surface would have detracted from the impact of the color combinations. The resulting effect is similar to that of a rug hung on the wall.<sup>3</sup>

Observers may wonder at the strange brown and black facial tints of the characters pictured in the windows. The medieval artist had almost no

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Crump and Jacob, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> Adams, op. cit., p. 145.

shades other than the primary colors, and perhaps thinking that all people from the East were of a darker race, he usually compromised with the use of a dark brown.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the most beautiful and inspiring examples of the glass-maker's art are the incomparable rose windows of this period. Located high in the nave, they shower a blaze of light and color into the interior of the cathedral.

Chartres has what is generally considered to be the most and the best glass in France. It is particularly interesting to note the nature of the signatures on the windows donated to the cathedral by the guilds. Since the guild craftsmen could not read, words meant little to them, so they used the symbol of their professional association. The butchers are represented by an ox hanging from a hook, the blacksmiths by an anvil, the money-changers by scales, and the innkeepers by a customer paying a bill.<sup>2</sup>

During both of the World Wars, the glass from Chartres and other cathedrals was removed and stored away until the danger of invasion had passed.

### Drama

Drama in the Middle Ages has its roots in the celebration of the Mass, which in itself was high drama. Before the altar of the sanctuary, which served as a stage, was enacted the sacred spectacle including dialogue and

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<sup>1</sup>Clark, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

responses by the participants clothed in ceremonial attire.<sup>1</sup>

One of the Church rituals that had a great effect upon the development of drama was the Easter ceremonial, which may be traced to the ninth century. To commemorate Christ's burial, the cross was removed from its usual position and hidden behind the altar for the duration of Good Friday and the following day. Just before Matins of Easter Day the following anthem was sung in dialogue:

Angel: "Whom seek ye in the tomb, O servants of Christ?"

The Maries: "We seek Christ that was crucified, O Host of Heaven."

Angel: "He is not here; He is risen as He foretold; go bear tidings that He is risen from the tomb."

All in Chorus: "I am Risen."<sup>2</sup>

Gradually the ceremony became more and more elaborate until it gave rise in many churches to the Easter Sepulchre. A grave was designated to be in the church at the top of a tall stairway, the steps of which were covered with a black cloth. Before the tomb walked soldiers in their traditional armor. Suddenly a flash of fire appeared, and all present fell to the ground in fear, whereupon a man came out of the tomb. The entire group joined in singing Alleluia.<sup>3</sup>

With the twelfth century the religious dramas became too involved for indoor performance, so they were presented on a platform erected outside the

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1027.

<sup>2</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 598.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 598-99.



church building. The actors were from among the people and did not include the clergy, as is commonly supposed. The earliest remaining play of this type, or ludus, is the twelfth-century French Representation of Adam.<sup>1</sup>

St. Francis of Assisi has been called the father of modern drama because of his influence in the representation of the crèche. One Christmas Eve at the beginning of the thirteenth century he built a small manger scene for the poor people who lived outside Assisi. A legend states that he was so overcome with tenderness that he pressed the image of the Christ Child to himself, and the Child embraced him.<sup>2</sup> Though St. Francis did much to perpetuate this early dramatic activity, he cannot be credited with originating it, for scenes of this type had been enacted in both England and Northern France prior to the thirteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

The term mystery play (derived from the Latin ministerium meaning "an action") was applied to the Biblical ludus. A play based upon the life of a saint was termed miriculum or miracle play. With the mid-thirteenth century, most of the miracle plays were presented in the vernacular. Humor had begun to be increasingly more important, and the subject matter was becoming more secular in nature.<sup>4</sup> By the late fourteenth century the terms mystery play and

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1028.

<sup>2</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 239.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

<sup>4</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1029.

miracle play began to be used interchangeably.<sup>1</sup>

Humor appeared even in the plays based upon Biblical sources. The human element was evident, but the medieval playwright exercised his imagination only when dealing with characters not specifically mentioned in the Bible. An example of this occurs in an early dramatization of the story of Noah in which Noah's wife is pictured as being a nagging, stubborn creature who has to be dragged bodily into the ark.<sup>2</sup>

Corpus Christi Day was the feast day which the Church celebrated in honor of the transubstantiation of the Host. Through the town would wind a great procession with the Host carried at the front. To encourage participation of the laity, Rome granted indulgences to those who attended the Church functions of that day.<sup>3</sup>

Every trade guild bore its banner in the procession. From the guild banner with its emblem or figures evolved the picture depicting a scene from Biblical history. This still scene, enacted by guild members and drawn in the procession on a cart, at first had no speaking parts connected with it. Soon, however, these scenes developed into a play for each guild, and from this came the town cycles.<sup>4</sup> The earliest of these was the Chester Cycle, which

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<sup>1</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 599.

<sup>2</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 242.

<sup>3</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 602.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

was first mentioned between 1268 and 1276.<sup>1</sup>

The productions by the tradesmen were treated in a very serious manner because of the constant element of competition between the various guilds. Definite rules and standards were adopted concerning these plays. No unemployed man was permitted to take part in the production. A manager was appointed to perform the duties of drawing up a budget for operating expenses, designating the actors, and arranging rehearsal times. Costumes and stage properties were often rented, however if the needed ones were unavailable, the guild members were willing to spend much of their spare time in constructing them. A salary was paid to each actor, the amount of pay being determined by the length of the role and the amount of business connected with it. During the times of rehearsal and performance the guild furnished the actors with their food and drink.<sup>2</sup>

Though the plays were repeated year after year, the people did not grow tired of them.<sup>3</sup> Since this was before the inventions of printing, the scripts were passed around in manuscript form.<sup>4</sup>

The popularity of these pageants grew to the extent that even very small

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<sup>1</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 251.

villages had their own mystery plays years before the Reformation.<sup>1</sup> The only such play still regularly presented is the Oberammergau Passion Play.

Even a cursory examination of the many existing mystery plays and other dramatic representations of the time reveals on the part of the medieval writer and actor a facility which matches the superb accomplishments of the Gothic architect. By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries tradition had been established in drama, and this was the great motivating factor in many cases. The slow and steady development of the art of expression by both the writer and the actor had begun. This movement, which had its roots in the early Middle Ages, was to lead directly to the powerful representations of the Elizabethan Era.<sup>2</sup>

The activity connected with the mystery plays contributed great benefits to medieval society as a whole. Gradually the costumes and set began to reflect the creative ingenuity of the Gothic mind. From a practical standpoint, preparing for the plays occupied the people's minds during the otherwise monotonous winter weeks before Easter and left them little opportunity for participation in activities of a less worthy nature. Perhaps the most important benefit was in the fact that it actively involved the people in something greater than themselves. Through these mysteries the teachings from the Bible and from the lives of the saints were removed from their abstract level and actually

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<sup>1</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 602.

<sup>2</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 250.

became a part of the lives of the people.<sup>1</sup>

### Painting

During the very early Middle Ages, the art of painting deliberately withdrew from nature as the artist became quite subjective in his approach. The influence of Christianity caused man's attention to shift from the outer world to inner thoughts. The Byzantine style of painting that was a product of the era reflected this attitude by turning toward abstraction and symbolism in portraying intense emotion.<sup>2</sup>

When the Byzantine style made its way to Western Europe, it lost its original expressive qualities and deteriorated into mere symbolism. As a result, the artists of the ninth and tenth centuries used almost no imagination, but automatically imitated the painters of former generations. Technique became coarse, and creativity was replaced by mechanical reproduction. The thirteenth century saw art begin to break away from the chains of Byzantium with the first appearance of the various nationalistic trends. It was during this time that Cimabue brought Italian painting into the foreground.<sup>3</sup>

The emotional awakening of the thirteenth century was accompanied by a new approach to spiritual thinking that is best represented by the teachings

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>2</sup>Oswald Sirén, Giotto and Some of His Followers, Vol. I, trans. Frederic Schenck (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1917), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

of Saint Francis of Assisi. Monks, nobles, and peasants alike were caught up in this new concept of life that recognized the preciousness of the natural world.<sup>1</sup> As thinking became more objective, so did painting begin to lose some of its old, abstract qualities in favor of a trend toward more objective and realistic creativity.

In several instances in history there have been men of genius whose accomplishments in their field of art formed the turning point from the stylistic expression of their own era to that of the ensuing period. Cimabue was such a figure in the area of painting. Properly named Cenni de Pepo, Cimabue left little in the way of biographical information. His dates are uncertain, but it is generally believed that he lived from c. 1240 to c. 1302.<sup>2</sup>

Cimabue's work was deeply rooted in the traditions of Byzantium, but his interpretation, truly a Western version, showed a more profound note of truth and humanity within the formally balanced structure of his paintings. Most of his figures still were confined within the traditional Byzantine outlines of face and drapery, and conventional rigidity in design is evident in the positioning of the figures and in certain facial details. His interpretation, however, seems to be more plastic in nature when it is closely compared with the iron framework of the authentic Byzantine school.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Luisa Marcucci and Emma Micheletti, Medieval Painting, trans. H. E. Scott (New York: Viking Press, 1960), p. 93.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



His Uffizi Madonna (see PLATE XXII) shows faint traces of the budding, Gothic interest in humanity. Earlier Byzantine painters had used conventional classifications of people, feelings, and actions in determining the definite physical attributes of their figures. Cimabue departed from slavish adherence to physical type by showing the sacred dignity of the prophets, the youthful grace of the angels, and the austere femininity of the Virgin.<sup>1</sup>

The work of Cimabue, the principal and dominating figure of Italian painting in the second half of the thirteenth century, was surpassed only by the completely new concept of art and humanity that emerged in the fourteenth century. Although he never renounced the Byzantine tradition, he may be credited with bringing to an end the mechanical repetition of Eastern works.<sup>2</sup>

During the thirteenth century, two distinctly different schools of painting emerged: the Sienese school and the Florentine school. The Sienese school retained the Byzantine manner with an accent on abstract patterns and linear design. Emphasis was placed on tempera technique<sup>3</sup> used in miniatures, and paintings were frequently given rich, gold backgrounds.<sup>4</sup> Although Siena is less than thirty miles from Florence, in the thirteenth century it was closer in

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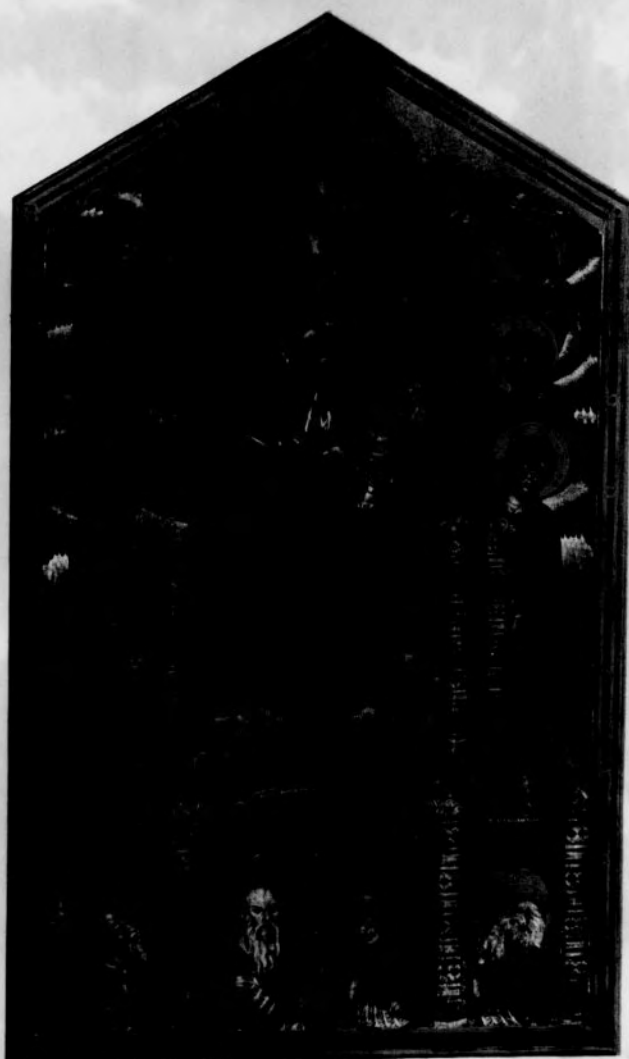
<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>3</sup>For an explanation of tempera technique see Gardner, Art Through the Ages, 4th ed. rev., pp. 21-22.

<sup>4</sup>Helen Gardner, Art Through the Ages, ed. Sumner McK. Crosby (4th ed. rev.; New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1959), p. 274.

1011



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MADONNA ENTHRONED, WITH SAINTS AND ANGELS  
UFFIZI, FLORENCE

CIMABUE. 1240?—1302?  
FLORENTINE SCHOOL

spirit to the mystic East. This accounts for the Siennese school's conservatism and hesitance to admit new ideas and classical influences.<sup>1</sup>

Duccio di Buoninsegna (1268-1319) represents the height of the Siennese tradition. As a young man, he had been influenced by Cimabue, and his Rucellai Madonna (see PLATE XXIII) shows a definite reference to Cimabue's style. The final effect, however, is contemplative rather than dramatic in spirit. Curving lines seem to give the painting a more delicate, graceful texture. Duccio's previous experience as a painter of miniatures probably accounts for the intimate, sensitive qualities that appear in his work. Although his was an interpretation of Cimabue's style, it, at the same time, represented a break from it. The other influences to which Duccio had been exposed caused him to show in his paintings more of the Gothic element.<sup>2</sup>

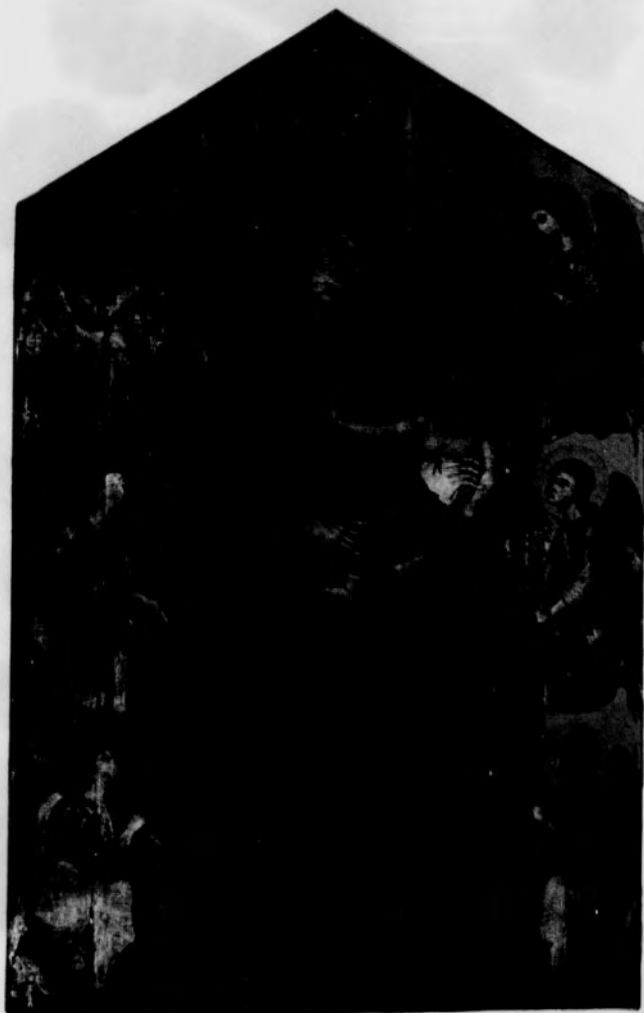
The Annunciation (see PLATE XXIV) of Simone Martini (c. 1285-1344) has more of a lyrical, decorative quality than does Duccio's Madonna. A smooth, flowing movement is begun by the shrinking figure of the Virgin, is picked up by the pointed arches, and is carried back to the kneeling figure of the angel. More rapid movement is seen in the angel's fluttering cloak and wings. There is great contrast between the brightness and activity of the angel and the quiet, dark figure of the Virgin. These two opposing elements are

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<sup>1</sup>Gardner, Art Through the Ages, 3rd ed., p. 469.

<sup>2</sup>Marcucci and Micheletti, op. cit., p. 97.

1042



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MADONNA ENTHRONED, WITH ANGELS (RUCELLAI MADONNA). c. 1285  
UFFIZI, FLORENCE

DUCCIO DI BUONINSEGNA. c. 1260—1319  
SIENESE SCHOOL

1015



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

THE ANNUNCIATION  
UFFIZI, FLORENCESIMONE MARTINI, 1283—1344  
SIENESE SCHOOL

PLATE XXIV

given a sense of unity by the vase of flowers, the olive branch, and the floor.<sup>1</sup>

The origin of the Florentine school is more obscure than that of the Sienese. One of the primary characteristics of Florentine paintings is that the figures are sculptural in nature.<sup>2</sup> Light and shadow are used to give to each form an illusion of weight and of real existence in space.<sup>3</sup>

A very charming myth, attributed to Lorenzo Ghiberti, states that one day Cimabue happened to come upon a boy who was sitting in a meadow and sketching pictures of sheep on a stone. Noticing the lad's talent, Cimabue persuaded the boy to leave home to study with him. The boy was Giotto, who later founded the Florentine school of painting.<sup>4</sup>

The birthplace of Giotto of Bondone was Vespignano, a small village near Florence.<sup>5</sup> The exact date of his birth is unknown, but writings from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries have indicated both the dates 1267 and 1276. The earlier date is considered to be more nearly accurate because it was mentioned in an earlier manuscript.<sup>6</sup> Giotto was not his given name, but probably

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<sup>1</sup>Gardner, Art Through the Ages, 3rd ed., p. 471.

<sup>2</sup>Gardner, Art Through the Ages, 4th ed. rev., p. 276.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 275.

<sup>4</sup>Florence S. Kossoff, "Giotto," Encyclopedia Americana, 1960 ed., XII, 662.

<sup>5</sup>Carlo Carrà, Giotto (London: A. Zwemmer, 1925), p. 27.

<sup>6</sup>Sirén, op. cit., p. 21.

was a diminutive of either Ambrogiotto or Parigiotto.<sup>1</sup> Nothing is known of his early years, but it is presumed that he finished his apprenticeship at the age of eighteen. After periods first as a worker and then as an artisan, he probably opened his own shop.<sup>2</sup> Statements have been made regarding his precocity, claiming that he began his apprenticeship at twelve years of age.<sup>3</sup> It is evident that he studied with Cimabue, but exactly how and when the two artists met is extremely uncertain.<sup>4</sup>

Giotto was known as a man of great wit and merry temperament, but the stories concerning this must be taken lightly.<sup>5</sup> There are more manuscripts and other records relating to Giotto than to any other artist who lived prior to or during his lifetime;<sup>6</sup> however, there is insufficient evidence to establish an accurate chronology of his works.<sup>7</sup> The only work of his that can be dated with any degree of accuracy is the cycle of the life of the Virgin in the Arena Chapel at Padua (1303-1306).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Carrà, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup>Eugenio Battisti, *Giotto*, trans. James Emmons (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1960), p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>Carrà, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup>Kossoff, *op. cit.*, p. 662.



None of his early works have survived, and one can only speculate concerning the nature and quality of these paintings.<sup>1</sup> Of Giotto's paintings that remain, many have been repainted and restored to such an extent that they can no longer be called originals.<sup>2</sup> The question as to which of the works of the period should be ascribed to Giotto has best been answered by consideration of the characteristics of style rather than by accrediting existing documents with reliability.<sup>3</sup>

Art criticism had its beginnings with Giotto. Painting, which formerly had been passed off as a type of handicraft, began to be recognized as an artistic discipline.<sup>4</sup>

The unusual fame that Giotto enjoyed during his lifetime was due partially to his innate genius and in part to the fact that his tastes were the same as those of the great humanistic thinkers of the period.<sup>5</sup> Dante, Boccaccio, and Petrarch all named him Italy's most important artist.<sup>6</sup>

A great friendship is said to have existed between Dante and Giotto, but

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<sup>1</sup>Carrà, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Kossoff, *op. cit.*, p. 662.

<sup>3</sup>Carrà, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>Battisti, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>Kossoff, *op. cit.*, p. 662.

nothing is known of the extent to which the poet influenced the artist's thinking.<sup>1</sup>

In the eleventh canto of Purgatory, Dante wrote:<sup>2</sup>

Cimabue thought to hold the field in painting and now Giotto hath the cry,  
so that the fame of the other is obscured.

In the Podesta chapel of the Bargello Palace at Florence is a portrait of Dante which was painted either by Giotto or by one of his assistants. Both Giotto and Dante portrayed genuine, human feeling in their works, and both refused to have their creative endeavors cast in the stylistic molds of their predecessors.<sup>3</sup>

A few years after Giotto's death, Boccaccio wrote:<sup>4</sup>

Giotto had so rare a talent that there was nothing in nature which he with pen or brush could not paint so like as to be mistaken for the thing itself, for many times the things he painted were so real that men's vision was led into error thinking real what was only painted . . . worthily he could be called one of the lights of Florence's glory . . .

Prior to Giotto's time, the painter considered himself a craftsman rather than an artist. He worked in a shop and belonged to the guild of druggists (medici e speziale) who made the colors he used. Like the architect, the painter worked only on commission. Much of the master-painter's time was spent in the training of assistants. Usually he designed paintings and super-

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<sup>1</sup>Carrà, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Dante Alighieri. The Divine Comedy. The Carlyle-Wicksteed translation. Introduction by C. H. Grandgent (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), p. 260.

<sup>3</sup>Marcucci and Micheletti, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>4</sup>Carrà, op. cit., p. 11.

vised their execution by his assistants.<sup>1</sup>

During the fourteenth century, Cennino Cennini, an Italian painter, wrote an instruction book concerning the technical aspects of painting. He advises the painter to use the best materials always. "Even if you do not get paid, God and our Virgin will make it up to you in peace of mind and health of body."<sup>2</sup> He further specifies that for the faces of young people, the paint must be mixed with yolk of the egg of a city hen. This is lighter in color than that of the country hen, which is good only for faces of older people. He states the proportions of the average man, but he declines to give those of the woman, because: "There is not one of them perfectly proportioned."<sup>3</sup>

During Giotto's time and for two centuries after him, the fresco technique was used in wall decoration. In order for the powdered pigments of the paint to unite chemically with the lime of the plaster, the paint had to be applied before the plaster dried.<sup>4</sup> It was in the painting of frescos that Giotto excelled.

Giotto is best remembered for two main accomplishments: his departure from the flat, Byzantine style and his direct use of nature as a model.<sup>5</sup> Even

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<sup>1</sup>Christensen, op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>5</sup>Carrà, op. cit., p. 11.

in light of Cimabue's attainments, painting prior to Giotto had been cold and abstract in character. Most of these early works had a deep, yellowish-greenish color that probably resulted from the use of wax both as a varnish and in the mixing of colors. Giotto used the juice of raw figs in mixing his colors, so he was able to get a warmer and clearer effect.<sup>1</sup>

The figures in Byzantine painting were characterized by their somberness and their extreme length. In contrast, Giotto's figures seem thickly set and almost square. The faces have a human quality of warmth and animation, and the soft folds of the garments give an effect of relief.<sup>2</sup>

Although he was a keen observer of both man and nature, Giotto never confused the theory of the imitation of reality with that of creativity.<sup>3</sup> It is true that he used nature as a model, but his work has a definite spark of creative genius that separates it from mere imitation.<sup>4</sup>

All of his paintings were based on the rectangle<sup>5</sup> with the figures within constructed in a tangible, solid manner.<sup>6</sup> An acute observer of detail, he made his landscapes and his use of perspective and light and shadow far more lifelike

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>6</sup>Battisti, op. cit., p. 15.

than had painters before him.<sup>1</sup>

Giotto succeeded in transplanting Biblical scenes and characters from their mystical surroundings to earth, leaving only a slight gap between the sacred and the profane. In fact, the profane element was given a sense of dignity that it had not possessed before.<sup>2</sup>

Giotto gave new life to the theme of the Virgin in Majesty. (See PLATE XXV.) Both the scale and the volume of the figure are very imposing. This is perhaps the first time that the anatomical structure of the Virgin was indicated in a painting. Only a small portion of the work can be attributed to Giotto with absolute certainty. It is safe to say that he painted the Virgin's face and the two kneeling angels, while the remainder of the work was completed by his assistants.<sup>3</sup>

The element of emotion is clearly evident in The Bewailing of Christ. (See PLATE XXVI.) The body of Christ is held and surrounded by actual people united in a common expression of genuine, human grief. Angels, overcome with grief, fill the sky. The mourning is more restrained in the figures that are closest to the body. All of the lines in the painting--the curves of the bending figures and the diagonal of the hill--direct the eye toward the head of Christ. The barren landscape with its rocky hillside and dead tree contributes

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

1012



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MADONNA ENTHRONED  
UFFIZI, FLORENCEGIOTTO. 1266?—1337  
FLORENTINE SCHOOL

B 68



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THE BEWAILING OF CHRIST  
 CHAPEL OF THE ARENA PADUA  
 GIOTTO 1266?—1337  
 FLORENTINE SCHOOL

PLATE XXVI



to the intense emotional quality which permeates the entire fresco.<sup>1</sup>

Giotto did not try to make sacred figures seem more mystical; he brought them down to earth for the first time in the history of religious art.<sup>2</sup> This is particularly evident in attitudes and gestures which have nothing sacred about them, but are based on human habits of daily life.<sup>3</sup> The Flight into Egypt (see PLATE XXVII) is an excellent example of Giotto's ability to depict human personalities. The Virgin seems to be lost in thought--possibly thinking of the fate of her Son, whom she holds tenderly in her arms. The young mule-teen, who is tired of walking, turns to Joseph, but Joseph is thinking only of the safety of his family.<sup>4</sup>

Had the Franciscans observed Saint Francis' testament of poverty, Giotto probably would not have decorated the Church at Assisi. A decree of 1279 condemned the use of sculptures, frescoes, and stained glass, but the order violated this boldly. The Church at Assisi became the most intricately decorated in Europe and for a period of fifty years was one of the most active centers of religious painting in Italy.<sup>5</sup> Giotto used the help of a number of assistants in painting the Saint Francis cycle because only a relatively short

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<sup>1</sup>Gardner, Art Through the Ages, 3rd ed., p. 473.

<sup>2</sup>Battisti, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>4</sup>Marcucci and Micheletti, op. cit., p. 116.

<sup>5</sup>Battisti, op. cit., p. 18.

B 61



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THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT  
CHAPEL OF THE ARENA, PADUA  
GIOTTO. 1266?—1336  
FLORENTINE SCHOOL

time was allowed for its completion.<sup>1</sup> Possibly influenced by more important work elsewhere, Giotto left his assistants to finish the cycle, using his sketches as a guide.<sup>2</sup>

Giotto did not portray Saint Francis as the remote recluse he had been considered in the thirteenth century. Instead he was pictured as a living man filled with love and humility. Giotto must have understood all that was most human in his subject, for he seemed to praise Saint Francis' simple, silent heroism.<sup>3</sup> (See PLATE XXVIII.)

The Death of Saint Francis (see PLATE XXIX) expresses an atmosphere of deep calm achieved through the use of symmetry and the balance of horizontal and vertical lines. The motionless, column-like figures at the sides provide a frame for the central group. The Death of Saint Francis is a distinct contrast to The Bewailing of Christ, in which a feeling of tension is achieved due to stress on asymmetry and the use of diagonal lines.<sup>4</sup>

Thus in the last analysis Giotto's art is seen to be a long, impassioned meditation on human reality; a reality he discovered thanks to an amazing power of intuition and sublimated by grace of his natural nobility of mind. He does not regard the lofty ideal he sets himself as the terminal point, but as an infinite horizon, with vistas opening on the ultimate significance

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>Marcucci and Micheletti, op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>4</sup>Gardner, Art Through the Ages, 3rd ed., pp. 474-75.

and purport of man's life. Which is why, like Dante's, Giotto's vision of the world, though deeping within the limits of the Gothic culture of his day, was a starting-off point of the humanistic culture presently to arise.<sup>1</sup>

### Literature

It has been said that, besides the Scriptures, the three most widely read books in twelfth and thirteenth-century Europe were The Romance of the Rose, Reynard the Fox, and The Golden Legend.<sup>2</sup> These three differ greatly in subject matter, but each one is as innately Gothic as any great cathedral of the period. Of the three, The Romance of the Rose was the most popular literary work in all of Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and for most of the fifteenth. This is substantiated by the fact that although Chaucer was widely read during the period, there are more than three times as many extant manuscript copies of The Romance of the Rose than there are of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.<sup>3</sup>

The Roman de la Rose was begun around the year 1237 by Guillaume de Lorris, who presumably died before completing his poem which he left unfinished at line 4058.<sup>4</sup> Besides this, nothing is known of William except that he

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<sup>1</sup>Jacques DuPont and Cesare Gnudi, Gothic Painting, trans. Stuart Gilbert (Geneva, Switzerland: Skira, 1954), p. 71.

<sup>2</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1053.

<sup>3</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 209.

<sup>4</sup>Charles W. Dunn (ed.) The Romance of the Rose, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, trans. Harry W. Robbins (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1962), p. xiii.

was a young scholar of Orléans.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that he was well-educated, for in that day no man could feign literary taste or a high degree of scholarship if he did not actually possess these attributes.<sup>2</sup>

William's allegorical poem, in which he purposed to unfold the various subtleties of courtly love, is narrated in the form of a dream vision. The Lover wanders into an ethereal garden where he is pierced in the heart by arrows shot from the bow of the God of Love. The entire poem centers around his numerous attempts to gain possession of a beautiful Rose guarded by numbers of thorns. The Lover himself is the only human in the work, the remaining characters being personifications of attitudes and qualities found in any medieval court in which a man wooed a woman: Fear, Fair Welcome, False Seeming, Jealousy, Wealth, Pity, Shame.

The love of which William writes is not Christian love, but genuine erotic passion--the extra-marital relationship characteristic of the chivalric code. His style has a warmth and a dreamy, lyrical quality that does not appear in the two concluding portions. An anonymous conclusion of only sixty-one lines was added by a man who used no imagination, but showed a marked desire to end the poem quickly.

A rather lengthy conclusion was produced a generation later by Jean de Meun, a young man steeped in the scholastic disciplines of the University of

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1051.

<sup>2</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 215.

Paris.<sup>1</sup> His style is in a world apart from the dreamy quality of William's lines. His characters expound in lengthy orations, each defending his position in life, debating, rationalizing and disputing in the scholastic fashion. After more than 17,000 lines of academic discourse, the Lover finally gains possession of the Rose.

A masterpiece in the true Gothic style, the Romance pictures the grotesque and the profane as well as the sublime and the sacred.<sup>2</sup> The poem is of great sociological as well as literary value, giving insight into the social code of the time. The Romance's popularity indicates the fact that the people were receptive to the more serious types of literature. It was one of the first books to be printed--probably as early as 1481.<sup>3</sup>

Many authors probably contributed their talents toward fashioning the amazing experiences of Reynard the Fox. Almost every age and every language has its animal fables appealing to all age groups, and Reynard stands out as one of the most intriguing mischief-makers of all time. Constantly he schemes to outwit creatures far larger and far stronger than he. Human shortcomings appear more palatable when seen in animal guise. Reynard demonstrates the inconsistency between what a man appears to be and that which

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<sup>1</sup>Dunn, op. cit., p. xvii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. xiii.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. xxv.



he actually is.<sup>1</sup> His adventures form one of the most entertaining and humorous books ever written.

Jacobus de Voragine, a Dominican preacher, produced The Golden Legend (Legenda Aurea) in the latter part of the thirteenth century.<sup>2</sup> This work contains brief stories of the lives of some of the greater saints of the Church since the time of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Jacobus favored the historical approach in his writing, and he made a sincere effort to separate legend from truth. Frequently, as in the story of Saint Thomas the Apostle, he expressed his doubts as to the validity of a particular happening.<sup>4</sup> Literal accuracy, however, was not Jacobus' primary concern; the charm of the story as a whole was more important to him.<sup>5</sup>

His very nature caused medieval man to refuse the making of a sharp delineation between fact and fiction. Imagination and flights of fancy were almost as real to his naive mind as were actual events. This often resulted in strange combinations of sacred and profane elements. The romances and epics of the period abound with bears, dragons, unicorns and other strange beasts,

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<sup>1</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 214.

<sup>4</sup>Jacobus de Voragine, The Golden Legend, trans. William Caxton, ed. with introduction by George V. O'Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 12.



and assortments of miracles.<sup>1</sup> Jacobus relates in his Golden Legend the strange story of the gentle Saint Martha's subduing of a fierce dragon.<sup>2</sup> One may suppose that these stirring histories of lives filled with love and good works must have helped to boost the faith and the character of Gothic men who read The Golden Legend.

As was the case with practically the entire bulk of the serious literature of the Middle Ages, the three works previously mentioned were written in Latin. This was not due to the authors' lack of ability to manipulate the vernacular, but it was caused by the fact that Latin was practically a universal language at that time, spoken by scholars in all parts of Europe.<sup>3</sup>

The first important work in the vernacular was written by a man who had been christened Durante Alighieri in the year 1265. He probably was the one responsible for shortening his own name to Dante.<sup>4</sup>

Dante has been called the first really learned layman of the Middle Ages in Western Europe.<sup>5</sup> As far as his early background is concerned, it is certain that he received as thorough an education as was possible at that time.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>Walsh, The Thirteenth Greatest of Centuries, p. 221.

<sup>4</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1058.

<sup>5</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>6</sup>C. H. Grandgent, introduction to The Divine Comedy, Dante Alighieri, the Carlyle-Wicksteed translation (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), p. vi.

He was reared in Florence, which in the late thirteenth century was the most civilized city in Western Europe.<sup>1</sup>

At the turn of the fourteenth century, Florence was torn by political contention between the old nobility (the Blacks) and the upper middle class (the Whites). Dante, a White, was quite active in civil matters, for he was elected to the Priory or municipal council.<sup>2</sup> The controversy grew to such dimensions that in 1302 Dante was among a group exiled from the city. He was sentenced to be burned alive if he were caught inside the boundaries of Florence again.<sup>3</sup> Dante hated the city because of the political dispute that caused him to be a wanderer for nineteen years, but he had vague hopes of being reinstated to a place of honor through the merits of his Divine Comedy. This, however, did not happen.<sup>4</sup>

In both the Vita Nuova (his autobiography) and the Divine Comedy Dante pays glowing tribute to Beatrice, a woman of great beauty, but one about whom almost nothing is known. Dante and Beatrice saw each other for the first time when both were nine years of age and apparently did not meet again until nine years later.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>2</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1061.

<sup>3</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>4</sup>Grandgent, op. cit., p. ix.

<sup>5</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1059.

Although this is one of the most beautiful love stories of all time, there was no thought of marriage connected with the relationship. Some sources state that Beatrice married another man in 1289,<sup>1</sup> but others doubt the validity of this and prefer to state that it is impossible to determine whether she was married or even who she was in the first place.<sup>2</sup> But it is unanimously assumed that Beatrice was a real person and was the object of an unwavering love.<sup>3</sup>

After Beatrice's untimely death in 1290, Dante had a series of brief love affairs. The following year he married Gemma Donati, the daughter of an established Florentine family. Being true to the spirit of the times, Dante never mentioned his wife or his children in any of his poetry, for to do so would have been in extremely poor taste.<sup>4</sup> This is another example illustrating the gulf that existed between the ideas of marriage and of romantic love.

Dante entitled his Divine Comedy simply Commedia. The adjective Divina was contributed in the seventeenth century to express the opinion of the literate public.<sup>5</sup> Dante called his work a comedy because it begins in misery and ends in happiness contrasting with a tragedy which pictures a downfall.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 1060.

<sup>2</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 209.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1061.

<sup>5</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>6</sup>Grandgent, op. cit., p. v.

The poem is in the style of an autobiographical narrative. As Gothic cathedrals had allegorical sculptures and frescoes, so the Comedy is one long allegory picturing the eventual rewards and punishments of mankind.

The form of the poem has a mystical significance connected with the sacred number three. There are three main divisions of this work: Inferno, symbolizing man's sin and suffering; Purgatorio, signifying the cleansing through faith; and Paradiso, representing redemption through unselfish love and divine revelation.<sup>1</sup> Each of the three divisions contains thirty-three cantos corresponding to the number of Christ's years on earth.<sup>2</sup> An introductory canto with the first group makes the total number an even hundred. Each canto is so intricately balanced within itself that there is a difference of only thirty-eight lines between the longest and the shortest of the hundred cantos.<sup>3</sup>

The mysticism of the poem is enhanced by the time element involved. Dante enters the depths of hell on Good Friday of 1300, the Year of Jubilee.<sup>4</sup> Just before daybreak on Easter morning Dante emerges at the foot of the mountain of purgatory.<sup>5</sup>

A further allegorical significance lies in the fact that the Year of Jubilee

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<sup>1</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1067.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1066.

<sup>3</sup>Coulton, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 218.

brought new spiritual life to Dante. His literary activity and the study of philosophy had partially lifted him from the despairing state caused by his exile, but he needed grace directly from God for the fulfillment of his spiritual rebirth.<sup>1</sup>

Virgil, the pagan poet who had such an influence in the fashioning of Dante's own poetic style, was chosen to lead him through the circles of hell and up the mountain of purgatory. Virgil is symbolic of knowledge, wisdom, and reason leading to the portals of true happiness.<sup>2</sup> It remains, however, for the beloved Beatrice, symbolic of the faith and love that lead directly to that happiness, to guide the poet through paradise.

At the beginning of the poem Dante has lost his way in a dark wood, whereupon Virgil, sent by Beatrice, comes to guide him. Together the two poets travel through the nine circles of hell, witnessing the punishments ingeniously derived to fit every conceivable crime. Dante boldly assumed the role of divine judge and placed a few popes in hell (Inferno, Canto XI) and even put a heretic, Sigier of Brabant, in heaven (Paradiso, Canto X).

In the lowest circle of hell stands Lucifer, buried waist deep in an immense well of ice. In the jaws of each of his three heads he is eternally chewing the three greatest traitors of all time: Judas, Brutus, and Cassius.

The mountain of purgatory has nine levels: an antepurgatory, seven main divisions (one for the purgation of each of the seven deadly sins), and the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 212.

<sup>2</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 1067.

Garden of Eden or Earthly Paradise at the summit of the mountain. Here in purgatory the spirits endure pain for sins that have been forgiven but for which satisfactory atonement has not been made.

At the top of the mountain of purgatory, Beatrice replaces Virgil as Dante's guide and takes him into the heavens. Paradise is composed of nine hollow funnels of space, each containing a planet and multitudes of stars. The climax of the poem is reached in the ninth sphere of paradise where Dante beholds the Beatific Vision.

Dante evidently tried to put all that he knew into his Comedy. Throughout the poem are constant references to his political loves and hates, surely intensified by the fact that this was written during the period of his exile. His style shows the use of a very vivid and lively imagination, but it is completely devoid of humor. Dante wrote with an instinctive taste for liberty and passion, but he confined these definitely within the bounds of order and form. It is Dante's synthesis of these opposing elements that gives his Comedy its lasting beauty and its sculptored power.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 1080.

### CHAPTER III

#### MUSIC

##### Troubadours

It is difficult if not virtually impossible to realize today the full significance of poetry in the literary, religious, political, and social life of the Medieval period. Raimon Vidal, a troubadour, gave the following account of the varied functions of poetry in his treatise "Razos de Trobar":

All Christendom, Jews and Saracens, the emperor, kings, dukes, counts and viscounts, commanders, vassals, and other knights, citizens and peasants, tall and little, daily give their minds to singing and verse-making, by either singing themselves or listening to others. No place is so deserted, or out of the way, that, as long as men inhabit it, songs are not sung either by single persons or by many together; even the shepherds in the mountains know of no greater joy than song. All good and evil things in the world are made known by the troubadours, and no evil talk, that has once been put into rhyme and verse by a troubadour, fails to be repeated every day.<sup>1</sup>

It was in Provence, the area of southeastern France that borders the Mediterranean, that this school of poetry originated. The first troubadour may be said to have appeared at the time that the first tales of outrage were brought to Europe by pilgrims who had visited the Holy Sepulchre.<sup>2</sup> From the same

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Hueffer, The Troubadours (London: Chatto and Windus, 1878), p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



religious impulse were derived both the Crusades and the art of the troubadour, and a new outlook was given to life in western civilization.

Though it is true that troubadour poetry treated all topics related to life--political, social, and literary--still the love songs were phenomena whose influence was to control the pen of generations of romantic poets. The concept of courtly love, which has been treated earlier in the discussion of chivalry, must be mentioned once again in relation to the song literature that exalted it.

The same era that believed in the innate worthlessness of woman established the poetry of woman-worship. She was at the same time both a misbegotten male and the loveliest and most lovable of God's creatures. Man's all-consuming interest in love was equalled only by his contempt for the female sex as a whole.

These paradoxical statements do not seem impossible when the narcissistic character of medieval love is realized. First of all, medieval society never for a moment abandoned the belief that woman is the inferior of the sexes. Thus, when a lover paid the highest compliments to his lady, he was really indulging in self-flattery. When he claimed that she was a superlative being he was elevating himself in his own self-love.<sup>1</sup>

The troubadours' idea of love was a baffling thing located somewhere

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<sup>1</sup> Maurice Valency, In Praise of Love (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1958), p. 26.

between erotic passion and Christian charity. Their love was terribly sensual, but the greatest importance was attached to casual contacts such as a glance or a fleeting touch of the hand. Even a word of greeting had powerful sensual significance.<sup>1</sup>

Courtship came to be an end in itself, and it was given a far greater sense of importance than was the act that is generally considered to be the goal of such a relationship. No longer a purely physical activity, courtship became one of taste and of artistic expression. Instead of his being a creature full of animal passion, the lover became an artist and a gentleman.<sup>2</sup> No longer the dominating member of the couple, the man pictured his condition as being one of weakness and child-like helplessness under the absolute domination of his lady.<sup>3</sup> This attitude prevailed only in extra-marital relationships, for love and marriage appeared to be incompatible institutions. In marriage the woman was the servant, but in love the man served.<sup>4</sup>

The reasons for the sudden appearance of such a great body of song literature are somewhat obscure. From the tradition of the Church, the all-pervading institution of the time, little can be obtained to explain the sudden emphasis on secular song. Historians at various times have attributed it to the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 65.

Celtic influence or to the latent influence of the common folk song. The most probable solution, however, is generally considered to be the influence of the Spanish Moors.<sup>1</sup>

All troubadour poetry was either lyrical (sung) or epic (recited with occasional music).<sup>2</sup> The trouvères of Northern France were the chief exponents of the latter type. In an epic the poet assumed the role of a fictitious character in telling his story, which might be related either in monologue or dialogue form.<sup>3</sup> Though the epic was found occasionally in Southern France, the Provençal troubadours preferred the more subjective lyric style.<sup>4</sup>

The bulk of Provençal poetry is of two general types: the sirvente and the canzo. Neither of these is bound by the requirements of a specific rhyme or meter formula. The only difference between the two types is in their subject matter. The canzo is simply a lyric poem which deals with love; the sirvente is one which does not.<sup>5</sup>

The writers of canzos had no models to copy or to emulate; they created their own style.<sup>6</sup> Often the poet's creative efforts were too completely absorbed

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>John Frederick Rowbotham, The Troubadours and Courts of Love (New York: MacMillan and Co., 1895), p. 74.

<sup>3</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 145.

in the obtaining of structural perfection at the expense of freshness and originality of expression. As a result, his feelings frequently were recorded in stereotyped formulas that he, himself, had set.<sup>1</sup>

Canzos, as well as the other lyrical poems dealing with love, were supposedly inspired by the poet's genuine erotic feeling. The deeper the troubadour's love, the better his song would be. His creations were never intended to be "commercial valentines."<sup>2</sup>

The twentieth-century writer of popular songs knows that his most lucrative audience is made of that segment of the population that possesses adolescent emotions and ideas; therefore his lyrics are written in the language of the adolescent. In like manner did the troubadour write for an audience of knights and ladies, and in doing so he assumed the role of a lovelorn knight. In this guise the poet was professionally lovelorn and unalterably miserable.<sup>3</sup> Though his songs occasionally were written in a triumphant spirit, the most common mood was one of intense melancholy--of complaint and longing.<sup>4</sup>

None of these songs were spontaneously improvised but were the result of meticulous calculations.<sup>5</sup> As a lyricist, the troubadour was greatly limited

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>2</sup>Valency, op. cit., p. 109.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

by the scope of his subject matter, particularly when writing of love. Several poets lamented the fact that they could think of nothing new to say.<sup>1</sup>

The following is a typical canzo attributed to Guillem de Cabestanh:

The day when first I saw you, lady sweet,  
When first your beauty deigned on me to shine,  
I laid my heart's devotion at your feet;  
No other wish, no other thought were mine.  
For in my soul you wakened soft desire;  
In your sweet smile and in your eyes I found  
More than myself and all the world around.

Your tender speech, so amorous, so kind,  
The solace of your words, your beauty's spell  
Once and for ever have my heart entwined,  
No longer in my bosom it will dwell.  
Your worth to cherish it shall never tire,  
Oh! then, your gentle grace let me implore;  
My all I gave you, I can give no more.

So wholly, lady, is my heart your own  
That love will not allow another's love.  
Oft when to gentle ladies I have flown,  
Somewhat the burden of my pain to move,  
The thought of you, the fountain of my bliss,  
Has aye dispelled all other vain desires;  
To you with tenfold love my heart retires.

Do not forget, I pray, the hopeful word  
You granted me when last I saw your face;  
My heart leaped up with pleasure when I heard  
The joyful message vouchsafed by your grace.  
In present grief my comfort still is this:  
That when your heart to mercy is inclined  
My ardent wish may yet fulfillment find.

Pride and unkindness have for me no sting,  
As long as I may hope that in this life  
One day from you may kindest message bring.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

Grief turns to joy and pleasure springs from strife;  
 For well I know that Love has willed it so  
 That lovers should forgive the deadliest sin,  
 By deepest sorrow highest bliss to win.

The hour will come, O lady, well I know,  
 When from your yielding mercy I may claim  
 The one word 'friend.' I ask no other name.<sup>1</sup>

The troubadour Piere Vidal is presumed to have accompanied King  
 Richard on his Crusade to the Holy Land.<sup>2</sup> Overcome by homesickness,

Piere wrote this canzo:

With my breath I drink the air  
 That Provence my Country sends me,  
 For a message ever lends me  
 Joy, from her most dear and fair.  
 When they praise her I rejoice,  
 Ask for more with eager voice,  
 Listen, listen night and morrow.

For no country 'neath the sun  
 Beats mine from Rozer to Vensa,  
 From the sea to the Durensa;  
 Nowhere equal joy is won.  
 With my friends, when I did part,  
 And with her I left my heart  
 Who dispelled my deepest sorrow.

Nothing harms me all the day  
 While her sweet eyes stand before me,  
 And her lips that rapture bore me.  
 If I praise her, no one may  
 Call my rapturous word a lie,  
 For the whole world can descry  
 Nothing wrought in sweeter fashion.

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<sup>1</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 166-67.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 174.

All the good I do or say  
 Only to her grace is owing,  
 For she made me wise and knowing,  
 For she made me true and gay.  
 If in glory I abound,  
 To her praise it must redound  
 Who inspires my song with passion.<sup>1</sup>

The function of the sirvente was comparable to that of the twentieth-century newspaper in making the public aware of contemporary issues of literary, social, or political import. Jongleurs circulated these songs with amazing rapidity. Thus the poets possessed such a dangerous weapon that kings and noblemen found it necessary to try to dodge or to return the verbal blows dealt by persons who were far beneath them in wealth and social status.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most common types of sirvente was the war song. The following example by Bertrand de Born shows no animosity toward a particular enemy, but it does create a rather bloody mood.

Well do I love the lusty spring,  
 When leaves and flow'rets peep to light!  
 I love to hear the song birds sing  
 Among the leafage in delight  
       Which forms their airy dwelling  
 And when on tented fields I spy  
 Tall tents and proud pavilions high,  
       My breast with joy is swelling;  
 Or when I see in legions lie  
 Squadrons of armoured chivalry.

What joy when scouts are skirmishing,  
 And scatter craven knaves in flight!

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 175.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 134.



What joy to hear the fighters fling  
High words and cries about the fight!

What bliss is in me welling,  
When castle walls that flout the sky  
Stagger to their foundations nigh!

What joys are me impelling,  
When gallant troops a city try,  
With trenches fenced impregnably!

And equal pleasure does it bring  
When some gay gallant is in sight,  
On lordly charger galloping,  
Who cheers his men from base affright,

Of rich rewards them telling.  
And when the camp he cometh nigh,  
Then must his men their prowess ply,

Their very lifeblood selling.  
For not a man is rated high  
Until to blows he can reply.

Swords, spears, and helmets glittering,  
Shields shivered, and in sorry plight -  
Such sights and sounds does battle bring;  
With crowds of vassals left and right

Their master's foemen felling,  
And horses mad, with rolling eye,  
Who frenzied through the battle fly.

The man of race excelling  
Thinks but of blood and butchery,  
And yearns for death or victory.<sup>1</sup>

The planh, a minor branch of the sirvente,<sup>2</sup> was a dirge-like poem written to commemorate the death of a friend, a mistress, or a benefactor. Usually a planh was composed of ten- or twelve-syllable meter.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rowbotham, op. cit., pp. 84-5.

<sup>2</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>3</sup>Rowbotham, op. cit., p. 76.

The following stanzas are taken from Bertrand de Born's planh written on the death of Henry, Prince of England, son of Henry II. The use of the same words at the end of the first, fifth, and eighth lines of each stanza gives the monotonous effect of a deathknell.

If all the pain, the grief, the bitter tears,  
The sorrow, the remorse, the scornful slight,  
Of which man in this life the burden bears  
Were thrown a-heap, their balance would be light  
Against the death of our young English King.  
Valour and youth stand wailing at his loss;  
The world is waste, and dark, and dolorous,  
Void of all joy, full of regret and sorrow.

All-present death, cruel and full of tears,  
Now mayst thou boast that of the noblest knight  
Whose deeds were ever sung to human ears,  
Thou hast deprived the world. No fame so bright  
That it could darken our young English King.  
'Twere better, if it pleased our Lord, to give  
Life back to him, than that the traitors live  
Who to good men cause but regret and sorrow.

The world is base and dark and full of tears.  
Its love has fled, its pleasure passed away;  
A falsehood is its truth. Each day appears,  
But to regret its better yesterday.  
Look up, ye all, to our young English King,  
The best among the brave and valorous!  
Now is his gentle heart afar from us,  
And we are left to our regret and sorrow.<sup>1</sup>

The upper class of medieval society found it necessary to create and maintain a high standard of courtliness and refinement in contrast to the natural coarseness of the times. As a result their poetry became dry and dull,

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<sup>1</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 201.

suffering because it was deprived of the energetic, spontaneous expression of the common folk element.<sup>1</sup>

A new spirit of freshness was incorporated into Provençal literature with the appearance of the pastorelle or shepherd's song. Even then the rustic element had to be modified to suit the tastes of the court.<sup>2</sup> A little poem, the pastorelle had no definite metric requirements and was usually written in rather short lines. In most of these the stage is set by the use of a short descriptive piece.<sup>3</sup> The poem then proceeds with a dialogue between the troubadour (in the guise of a knight) and a shepherdess. Very discreetly the shepherdess always refuses the knight's offers, being very careful to make a definite distinction between harmless flirtation and serious passion.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes the second person is a shepherd, as in the following pastorelle by Cadenet.

By a lone and leafy brake  
 I did on my way  
 A sad shepherd overtake,  
 Who in grief did say--  
 "Love, alack for me  
 And the shafts of calumny!  
     For my ladye  
     Sorrows evermoe,  
 Which doth give me woe."

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>3</sup>Rowbotham, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>4</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 79.

"Shepherd, slanderers are awake  
 Round me every day,  
 Saying that I pleasure take  
 Of a lady gay,  
 Who increasingly  
 Loves me in sweet modesty.  
 I in verity  
 Fain would have it so  
 As these slanderers show.

"Seigneur, since the lies they make  
 Lightly on thee lay,  
 Thou canst love not, or 'twould break  
 Thy fond heart for aye.  
 See what misery  
 Such foul slanderers bring me, see,  
 Most recklessly!  
 Foolish he, I trow,  
 Who defies their blow."<sup>1</sup>

The alba, or morning song, is a song in which the two lovers are together with a friend nearby serving as sentinel. Usually the alba is in dialogue form, the participants being the watchman and one of the lovers.<sup>2</sup> The final stanza is usually a statement made by the watchman.<sup>3</sup> Two characteristics of this form are the refrain at the end of each stanza and the recurring word alba.<sup>4</sup>

The following illustration, by an anonymous poet, opens with a brief narrative stanza. The lady is the speaker in the main body of the poem, and her words are sometimes addressed to her lover and sometimes are in soliloquy.

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<sup>1</sup>Rowbotham, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

The friend who is standing guard speaks in the final stanza.

Beneath a hawthorn on a blooming lawn  
A lady to her side her friend had drawn,  
Until the watcher saw the early dawn.  
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.

'Oh that the sheltering night would never flee,  
Oh that my friend would never part from me,  
And never might the watch the dawning see!  
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.

'Now, sweetest friend, to me with kisses cling,  
Down in the meadow where the ousels sing;  
No harm shall hate and jealous envy bring.  
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.

'There let with new delight our love abound  
--The sweet-voiced birds are carolling around--  
Until the watcher's warning note resound.  
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.

'I drink the air that softly blows my way,  
From my true friend, so blithe, so fair, so gay,  
And with his fragrant breath my thirst allay.  
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.'

The lady is of fair and gentle kind,  
And many a heart her beauty has entwined,  
But to one friend is aye her heart inclined,  
Ah God, ah God, the dawn! it comes so soon.<sup>1</sup>

The serena, or evening song, resembles the alba in its refrain at the end of each stanza and its recurring word ser (evening). This is sung by a lover whose lady has promised to meet him in the evening. He sings of his hatred for the day and its persistent brightness.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 91-2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

The tenso was a lively poetic debate on any topic concerning Provençal life and manners. These songs supposedly were written by more than one person.<sup>1</sup> In some instances the participants were fictitious persons; but this is not the case in the following tenso which takes place between Rambaud of Orange and the Countess of Die, who was a lady troubadour in her own right.

THE COUNTESS.

"Friend, with what a weight of woe  
Day by day I sit repining!  
'Tis from you that comes the blow;  
Yet you scarce suspect my pain.  
Why do you my love remain,  
When we so unfairly share  
You the joy, and I the care?"

RAMBAUD.

"Lady, love is measured so,  
When two lovers 'tis entwining,  
Each must in their manner know  
Joy and care, its constant train.  
But, my lady, I maintain  
Thy contention is unfair;  
For 'tis I the sorrows bear."

THE COUNTESS.

"Friend, if half the cares, I trow,  
That are mine, o'er thee were twining,  
Soon thou'dst feel thy spirit low.  
But thou reckest not, 'tis plain,  
How I ne'er can respite gain.  
'Tis the same to thee, how'er  
I thy hapless lover fare."

RAMBAUD.

"Lady mine, since slanders grow,  
Me to sorrow sad confining,  
And each slanderer is thy foe;

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 112.

I of them my leave have ta'en;  
 For through them it is in vain  
 That we seek for sunshine e'er,  
 Or one day of pleasure rare."

THE COUNTESS.

"Friend, I falter to bestow  
 Favours I would be designing,  
 For thy very actions show  
 Thee regardless of my bane.  
 If thou wert of other strain,  
 Then unto a saint I'd dare  
 Thee for virtue to compare."

RAMBAUD.

"Lady, lady, long ago,  
 Fear has been my bliss maligning,  
 Lest that slander, foul and slow,  
 O'er our love might weave its skein.  
 Hence it is that I complain;  
 Hence it is that I declare  
 Thou alone canst bless my prayer."

THE COUNTESS.

"Friend, so soft thy flatteries flow,  
 So to love thou art inclining,  
 Thou from chivalry wilt go  
 And descend to poor chicane.  
 I thy interest would explain,  
 For thou lookest elsewhere,  
 And of me thou reckest ne'er."

RAMBAUD.

"Lady mine, may I forego  
 Hawking when the sun is shining,  
 If my eyes elsewhere I throw,  
 Since thou first in tender vein  
 Didst to look upon me deign.  
 But my rivals do not spare  
 To malign me everywhere."

THE COUNTESS.

"Friend, I will believe in thee  
 And thy spotless loyalty."



RAMBAUD.

"Think me so, and thou wilt see  
Thy most loyal knight in me."<sup>1</sup>

The following tenso is not a battle of logic but a mutual statement of personal experience regarding the relationship of the poet's feelings and his artistic endeavors. The two troubadours are Sir Peirol and Bernart de Ventadorn.

'Peirol, how is it that for such a long time you have been without making verse or canso? Tell me what is the reason that you have ceased singing. Is it for evil or good, for sorrow or for joy, or for what? for I will know the truth of it.'

'Bernart, singing does not come pleasant to me, and I have lost all taste and liking for it. But as you insist upon having a tenso with me, I have forced my inclination. Little worth is the song that does not come from the heart, and as love has left me, I have left song and dalliance.'

'Peirol, you commit great folly, if you leave these off for such a reason; if I had harboured wrath in my heart, I should have been dead a year ago, for I also can find no love nor mercy. But for all that I do not abandon singing, for there is no need of my losing two things.'

'Bernart, my heart is changed, and wholly different from what it was: I shall no longer sing in vain. But I wish you may sing for ever of her who gives you no thanks, and waste your friendship.'

'Peirol, many a good word have I said of her, although none has ever been of any benefit to me. If she wants to keep her lion's heart, she cannot lock me out from all the world; and I know one of whom I would prefer the grant of a kiss to the free gift of one by her.'

'Bernart, it is a common thing that he who cannot win should make light of the loss; just as the fox spoke to the cherry-tree. For after she had tried everything she still saw the cherries a long way off, and then she said that they were worth nothing; and that is exactly how you talk.'

'Peirol, the cherries are all very well, but evil befal me if I believe that the fox never had a taste of them.'

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<sup>1</sup>Rowbotham, op. cit., pp. 78-80.

'Bernart, that is not my affair, but I regret my good faith; For I have gained nothing by it.'<sup>1</sup>

In cases in which two troubadours harbored a grudge against each other often they would battle it out in a song of combat rather than with swords.<sup>2</sup> The usual beginning is a challenge from one poet to the other to choose one side of a particular argument.<sup>3</sup> The same number of stanzas were given to each participant, and the rhyme and meter formulae established in the first stanza had to remain constant throughout the entire poem. Sometimes these poems were so full of slander and fierce insults that it is a wonder the combatants could adhere to their meter and rhyme rules.<sup>4</sup>

If there were more than two participants in a song of combat, it was known as a tournament rather than a tenso.<sup>5</sup> The following example is one of the best known of the Provençal tournaments, and it has an interesting story behind it.

Sir Savari de Mauléon went to Benaujatz to woo the Viscountess Lady Guillelma. With him he took Sir Elias Rudal, who was Lord of Bergerac, and Sir Jaufre Rudel of Blaia as traveling companions. Each of his two companions

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<sup>1</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., pp. 119-20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

had been a lover of the Viscountess before, but not one of the three men knew of this. At Benaujatz the enterprising young woman granted favors to all three men at the same time. She gazed lovingly at Sir Jaufre, who was seated in front of her. Sir Elias was on one side of her, Sir Savari on the other. She took Sir Elias' hand in her own, and she placed her foot on Sir Savari's foot. Not one of the three men knew of the favors paid the others until they made a mutual discovery in the casual conversation of the return trip. In an effort to find consolation, Sir Savari asked two of his friends their opinions as to who had received the greatest favor from the Viscountess.<sup>1</sup>

SAVARI DE MAULÉON.

"Gaucelm and Hugh, I give to you,  
Three amorous questions to contest:  
Accept the one you like the best,  
And leave to me the one you fear.  
A lady, kind as she was fair,  
Had lovers three who made their prayer.  
She, at one moment, gave to all  
Encouragement equivocal.  
At one she glanced most amorously,  
The other's hand she pressed with glee,  
The other's foot touched furtively.  
To whom of all, good Gaucelm, say  
Did she the greatest favour pay."

GAUCELM FAIDIT.

"I'll give thee my opinion clear,  
Since thou dost put me to the test.  
With him, I say, the palm must rest  
Who got the glance. My reasons hear.  
A glance, which in its lustre rare,  
Is shot from eyes, a peerless pair,  
Comes from the heart our sense t'enthrall,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

The heart, love's seat angelical.  
 And hence the love in priceless fee  
 Lies in the glance assuredly.  
 The hand--the hand--why that may be  
 Mere greeting. While the foot--it may  
 By accident thus go astray."

HUGHES DE LA BACHÉLERIE.

"Gaucelm, thou makest sorry cheer  
 With reasons such as that hast pressed.  
 I see but little love expressed  
 In any glance or silly leer.  
 The eyes may wander anywhere,  
 And scanty meaning can declare.  
 But when a hand symmetrical,  
 White as the snow celestial,  
 Ungloved, and ravishing to see,  
 Presses one's fingers amorously,  
 There--there is love's true augury.  
 Prove, if thou can'st, Savari, pray  
 The foot can better love display."

SAVARI DE MAULÉON.

"Good Hugh, thy choice has cost thee dear,  
 For thou hast left the easiest  
 To me, as 'twill be soon confessed.  
 The foot's soft signal must appear,  
 From its mere secrecy and care,  
 To earn the palm beyond compare.  
 Its pressure timorous did fall,  
 Concealed from eyes inimical,  
 And spoke of love convincingly,  
 Love without trick or treachery.  
 What is a shaken hand? To me  
 A common thing done every day.  
 While glances flutter, and away!"

GAUCELM FAIDIT.

"Savari, thou who art severe  
 On eyes, of things the loveliest,  
 Surely thou not rememberest  
 That glances carry far and near  
 The heart's deep secrets which we dare  
 Never by other means declare.  
 Glances the messengers I call,

Sent by the heart imperial,  
 As to the foot--why commonly  
 A foot meets foot when none's to spy,  
 Yet 'tis but accidentally.  
 While for the hand--'tis wrong to lay  
 Such stress upon mere idle play."

HUGHES DE LA BACHÉLERIE.  
 "Right in the teeth thou dirvest sheer  
 Of love and all the signs confessed,  
 Which it for ages hath possessed.  
 Talk not to me of glances clear.  
 Have not the eyes, so oft unfair,  
 Betrayed whole legions to despair?  
 Talk not of foot fantastical.  
 Prevail on me it never shall.  
 For if my lady's foot touched me--  
 Pshaw! 'twere a trifling vanity.  
 But if her hand did lovingly  
 Cling on to mine--ah, God! I pray,  
 Grant I may live to see that day!"<sup>1</sup>

The balada, which is identical with the dansa, was not at all like the modern ballad but was a song meant to accompany a dance. One of the oldest of all the poetic forms, there is very little known of its early development.<sup>2</sup> Most of the remaining baladas are anonymous simply because the form was so unsophisticated that dignified poets shunned it. Usually it was sung by one performer and danced by another.<sup>3</sup> Its content is no different from that of any other love song. Accurate identification may be made only by its title, by the

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<sup>1</sup>Rowbotham, op. cit., pp. 81-3.

<sup>2</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

recurrence of the word balada, or by its dance-like rhythm.<sup>1</sup>

The sestine is a prime example of the lengths to which troubadours went in deriving a fantastic structural formula for their lyrics. The mental and verbal gymnastics involved in the organization of the sestine can be appreciated only when it is outlined on paper.

The poem consists of six stanzas, each containing six lines written in blank verse.<sup>2</sup> Since this is blank verse, the final words of the lines within a given stanza do not rhyme with one another. The same final words are used for each stanza, and the sequence in which they are repeated is the key to the rhyme scheme. The final word of the first line of the first stanza becomes the final word of the second line of the second stanza. The word which completes the second line of the first stanza in turn completes the fourth line of the second stanza. The final word of the third line of the first stanza becomes the last word of the sixth line of the following stanza. Continuing in a similar manner, the rhyme scheme of the entire stanza as it relates to the succeeding two stanzas of Arnaud Daniel's sestine may be illustrated graphically in the following manner:

<u>Stanza I</u>		<u>Stanza II</u>		<u>Stanza III</u>
comes (1)		(6) room (1)		(6) soul
nail (2)		(1) comes (2)		(1) room
soul (3)		(5) kin (3)		(5) rod
rod (4)		(2) nail (4)		(2) comes
kin (5)		(4) rod (5)		(4) nail
room (6) etc.		(3) soul (6)		(3) kin

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>2</sup>Rowbotham, op. cit., p. 85.



The rhyme-word formula 6, 1, 5, 2, 4, 3 is held constant for each stanza. Following the sixth stanza is a short stanza which provides the climax. In its three lines are incorporated all six final words of the preceding stanza, and their use is determined by their placement in the sixth stanza as follows:

Stanza VI

nail (1)  
rod (2)  
room (3)  
kin (4)  
soul (5)  
comes (6)

Final words four, five, and six of the sixth stanza become the final words of the short stanza in that order. The first three final words of the sixth stanza are placed in the same order on each line immediately preceding the final word.

	1		4
Arnaud's fair song of nail and kith and kin;			
	2		5
And by her grace who whips with rod his soul,			
	3		6
'Twill be his joy if to her room he comes.			

The same feeling for balance that was demanded in securing the outer walls of a Gothic cathedral is reflected in the construction of the sestine. Here is Arnaud Daniel's sestine in its entirety:

The doughty will which to my spirit comes  
Is no defence 'gainst slanderer's claw and nail--  
The slanderer who for slander damns his soul.  
Since him I cannot lash with whip or rod,  
At least will I, freed from censorious kin,  
Taste sweet delights in meadow or in room.



Ah, when I think of that celestial room,  
 Where man of flesh ne'er by commandment comes,  
 Then my thoughts soar above my kith and kin,  
 I quail, I thrill down to my very nail,  
 And like a silly child before the rod  
 I fear I may be banished from her soul.

Fain would I love her body, not her soul,  
 If she would but conceal me in her room.  
 Her sternness wounds me more than any rod,  
 For where she is, her loving slave ne'er comes.  
 Near should we be as to the flesh the nail,  
 And then good-bye to protests from my kin!

Ah, never have I so adored my kin  
 As I do her - I swear it by my soul.  
 As near as is the finger to the nail,  
 So would I be unto her secret room.  
 From her sweet love new vigour o'er me comes,  
 As waxes stout and strong a feeble rod.

Since into flower oft bursts the withered rod,  
 And from old Adam come all kith and kin,  
 So the pure love which o'er my spirit comes  
 Waxes, and deeper could not have its soul.  
 Where'er she be, in meadow or in room,  
 My heart clings to her, as to flesh the nail.

For oh! my heart, as fastened by a nail,  
 Cleaves unto her, as bark to growing rod.  
 She is joy's tower, its palace, and its room.  
 I love her more than all my kith and kin,  
 And doubly paradise will bless my soul,  
 If for love's sake a lover thither comes.

Arnaud's fair song of nail and kith and kin;  
 And by her grace who whips with rod his soul,  
 'Twill be his joy if to her room he comes.<sup>1</sup>

The descort, or discord, is every bit as Gothic in nature as the sestine,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 86-7.

but the complete liberty allowed the poet is in direct opposition to the sestine where position of rhyme words and the number and length of both lines and stanzas were all established according to rule.<sup>1</sup> The earmark of the descort is deliberate confusion. Its rhymes are harsh, its meters irregular and full of wild contrasts. Frequently a poet will insert a paragraph or two of prose in the middle of his poem, and for additional variety he will make use of various languages and dialects.<sup>2</sup> This poetic confusion supposedly was the result of the troubadour's unfulfilled love. Such a conglomerate mixture of things is so characteristic of the Medieval period which, in itself, was characterized by constant conflict in almost every area of life.

The poetry of the troubadours may not be called literary poetry, for this would imply a total absence of the musical element. Nor can it be called poetry set to music, for in this the lyrics would be subservient to the music. Such an over-emphasis on the music would have made the troubadour only a writer of tunes -- a common minstrel. In his songs, which really should be called musical poetry, the chief place was given to the verse.<sup>3</sup> Though the poetry was given priority it was not meant to be read but to be sung, and for this reason the musical phrase was considered in writing the words. The total effect was designed to strike the ear rather than the eye, and the music served

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<sup>1</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 107.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 200.

to enhance the mood portrayed by the words.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of Provençal melodies that have been preserved were recorded in plainsong notation in which the duration of the individual notes is not indicated. By the thirteenth century time values in sacred music were being written in mensural notation, but since this was not the case for troubadour melodies, it has been supposed that no definite rhythm was meant to be prescribed and that the songs could have been interpreted in any rhythm chosen by the singer.<sup>2</sup> However, the melodies of the dance-songs must have had strictly organized rhythms, and these probably made use of the modal system. This was a rhythmic interpretation drawn from the metric analysis of ancient Greek poetry. The following modal patterns were used:<sup>3</sup>

1. Trochaic: | d d | d ...
2. Iambic: | d d | d ...
3. Dactylic: | d. | d d | d. | ...
4. Anapestic: | d d | d. | d d | ...
5. Spondaic: | d. | d. | d. | ...
6. Tribrachic: | d d d | d ...

Many of the Provençal melodies were written in the ecclesiastical modes,

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<sup>1</sup>Valency, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup>Curt Sachs, *Our Musical Heritage* (2d ed. rev.; New York: Prentice Hall, 1955), p. 70.

<sup>3</sup>Willi Apel, "Modes, Rhythmic," *Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), p. 453.

the dorian and the mixolydian being the most commonly used. However, a large number were also in major and minor keys. The melodies usually lie within the range of an octave; even the range of a sixth is not unusual.<sup>1</sup> The narrow range and frequently repeated pitches give a hypnotic effect to the song. The modern listener may be a little disturbed by the complete absence of a feeling of climax as far as the music is concerned. The melody often seems to pursue itself in endless circles.

There were four main types of musical form used in the Provençal songs:

1. The hymn or stanza type, which had a complete melody for the first stanza that was repeated for all subsequent stanzas. The canzo utilized this form.
2. The litany type, which used the same short melody for each line.
3. The sequence, which used one melody for every pair of lines: AA, BB, CC, DD, etc.
4. The carole (round-dance) or refrain type, which utilized the talents of both singers and dancers. Each stanza was sung by a leader with a chorus of dancers responding on the refrain. An example of this is the French rondeau, a song performed by those participating in a round-dance. In each instance the chorus of dancers repeated the music sung immediately before by the leader.

Soloist:	A	AB	
Chorus:	A		AB <sup>2</sup>

Only two hundred sixty-four of the troubadour melodies of southern

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<sup>1</sup>Gustave Reese, Music in the Middle Ages (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1940), p. 216.

<sup>2</sup>Sachs, op. cit., pp. 71-2.

France have been preserved. By the end of the twelfth century the movement had spread to the northern part of the country where the poets there were called *trouvères*. There are 1400 of their melodies that remain.<sup>1</sup> Because the *trouvères* adopted the forms and ideas of the poets of the South, their music is not dissimilar enough to warrant separate treatment here.

The troubadours were not illiterates who catered to an illiterate public as too often is the case with today's more popular authors and song writers. They were all artists who wrote for a discriminating public, and even the very worst of their number were highly skilled craftsmen.<sup>2</sup>

Eleanor of Aquitaine by her marriage to Henry II brought French taste and culture to England. Eleanor was the mother of Richard Coeur de Lion, who has been called the troubadour king.<sup>3</sup> Soon the minstrel became to England what the troubadour was to France.

Another French woman, Beatrix of Burgundy, brought the influence of her native country into Germany when she became the bride of Frederick Barbarossa. The German counterpart of the troubadour was the Minnesinger, Minne being an old German word for love.<sup>4</sup>

The most common accompanying instrument was the viele, the most

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<sup>1</sup>Donald N. Ferguson, A History of Musical Thought (2d ed. rev.; New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Valency, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>3</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 828.

<sup>4</sup>Ferguson, op. cit., p. 73.

important instrument of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The accompaniment was not independent but consisted of an approximation of the melodic line in unison with the voice. Preludes, interludes, and postludes probably were used.<sup>1</sup>

In actual performance one jongleur usually sang while another accompanied, but sometimes one performer did both.<sup>2</sup> From accompanying the melody in unison the instrumental part developed until it became an extemporaneous countermelody. When the countermelody was carried by a voice rather than an instrument it was called a descant,<sup>3</sup> and this was always pitched above the melody.<sup>4</sup>

For increased variety a still higher descant, known as the triple or treble, was added.<sup>5</sup> When listeners joined the jongleur in singing, they usually sang the composed melody which was called the tenor. The first descant above that was known as the counter-tenor or the part opposed to the tenor, and on top was the treble.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Harold Gleason, Music Literature Outlines, Series I: Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (2d ed. rev.; Rochester, N. Y.: Levis Music Stores, 1954), p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Rowbotham, op. cit., p. 209.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 214.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 215.



The jongleurs vied with one another to see who could improvise the most original descant. Such improvisation was extremely risky, for the jongleur could never be quite sure what his fellow singer on the other descant might do. The competition proved to be so keen that jongleurs began to sacrifice good taste in order to gain originality. Some of the troubadours became so disturbed by the musical results that they began to write out descants and to have the jongleurs rehearse them carefully.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the period it was difficult to draw the line between the titles troubadour and jongleur, for it seems that at first they may have been used interchangeably. The reason for this was that the activities of both were often combined in the same person.<sup>2</sup> The early jongleur-troubadour was a vagabond excluded from the company of respectable persons and who obtained his livelihood by giving exhibitions of his strength or skill in public.<sup>3</sup> Their condemnation by society was to last until some of them began to sing of saints, knights, and Christian heroes. The Church accepted these performers and made the distinction between them and the singers of immoral songs. Still there was no line drawn between those who sang and told stories and those who juggled, tumbled, and displayed trained animals.<sup>4</sup> Finally troubadour became

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>2</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>Valency, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 94.



the title of the creator of songs, and jongleur became that of the entertainer.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the troubadours mentioned in records of the day were of the nobility, though not of the highest nobility in most cases.<sup>2</sup> Though nearly all of them were nobly born, some gained their rank due to their extraordinary abilities.<sup>3</sup> The only difference between the troubadour and the nobleman who sang was that the troubadour traveled from castle to castle.<sup>4</sup> Because of his station he was expected to entertain his friends in a grand manner. Such extravagance sometimes led to financial embarrassment, and if this were the case the unfortunate troubadour might join a Crusade or become a jongleur.<sup>5</sup> Though being a part of the medieval tinpan alley was almost always financially exhausting, the glamour of the profession drew many restless souls into the ranks.

The troubadour's year began in the Spring when he set out on his travels.<sup>6</sup> His visits were always eagerly awaited by the lords who made him elaborate gifts of money, horses, and fine garments.<sup>7</sup> However, those who awaited his arrival most eagerly were the noble ladies. They competed with

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>2</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>3</sup>Rowbotham, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>7</sup>Hueffer, op. cit., p. 59.

one another for the privilege of having the troubadour sing their praises at the other castles he would visit. Most of the ladies of whom the troubadour sang were married women whom he had met on his journey, and his songs of love were full of meaningless compliments.<sup>1</sup>

Since the jongleur usually was the performer, it was a rare privilege to hear the troubadour sing. Every castle kept a large book of songs, and the troubadour would always leave one or two of his creations to add to the collection.<sup>2</sup> With the coming of winter he returned home to write new songs, and his jongleur went with him to learn them.

The jongleur was to the troubadour what the squire was to the knight.<sup>3</sup> In England the jongleur was sometimes called a gleeman or a minstrel. Frequently his merit was determined by his proficiency in the playing of instruments.<sup>4</sup> The good jongleur was able to play well a large number of instruments, to sing in a pleasing manner, to perform music of various styles and moods, and to perform amusing tricks if the occasion demanded it.<sup>5</sup> Among the jongleurs there was a tremendous spirit of competition, for they were constantly trying to out-do each other.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rowbotham, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 157.

What the troubadour did for vocal music the jongleur did for instrumental music. As a rule troubadours showed little concern for instruments, the people could not play, and monks were concerned only with organs. In the hands of the jongleurs instruments grew up. Today's violin owes its very existence to these medieval performers.<sup>1</sup>

Soon the number of jongleurs became greater than that of troubadours, and many of them left their masters to travel alone as wandering minstrels.<sup>2</sup> The distinction between the two groups was that troubadours used only their own creations while wandering minstrels performed works of other authors.<sup>3</sup>

The jongleur's life of playing, singing, and being amusing was not as gay and carefree as it may seem. If he became separated from his troubadour master he was completely without protection and support, for in becoming a jongleur he had forfeited both his political rights as a resident of a country and his natural position as a part of human society. In the event that he were killed, his murderer could not be punished. If he were beaten or robbed his assailant could not be brought to justice, and if he tried to avenge himself there was no point in having him exiled, so he was either branded or disfigured.<sup>4</sup>

As the use of the printing press became more widespread, jongleurs were

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>3</sup>Hueffer, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>4</sup>Rowbotham, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

less in demand for publishing news.<sup>1</sup> One by one they left the ranks for other fields of activity--some becoming professional acrobats or actors in mystery plays. The breed as a whole was completely disorganized, and its members grew more and more degenerate.

As early as the thirteenth century the Church had voiced its disapproval of both jongleurs and mystery plays. By the fifteenth century the disapproval had grown into vigorous condemnation.<sup>2</sup>

The jongleurs in their lawless state began to spread songs that glorified outlaws. One of these bandits, Robin Hood, through their efforts became the national hero of England.<sup>3</sup>

The decline of the jongleur was the result of a slow process of decay, and by the fifteenth century none of them remained. In contrast, the disappearance of the troubadour was the result of a sudden calamity. All but a very few were brutally wiped out by the beginning of the fourteenth century.<sup>4</sup> In Albigensis developed a religious group called the Albigenses whose beliefs were based on Eastern ideas brought back by the Crusaders.<sup>5</sup> They considered good

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 294.

and evil to be relative,<sup>1</sup> and they believed that one should be able to do as he wished and receive absolution whenever he desired it.<sup>2</sup> If good and evil are both logical and supported by Divine Will, it is ridiculous to try to oppose evil. One can easily see how this tenet would fit the troubadour system of morals. Provence absorbed this influence of Eastern mysticism as completely as she had Byzantine music and art.<sup>3</sup>

The troubadours, impulsive creatures that they were, began to compare this with the teachings of the Church, and to make matters worse they sang about it. In their act of open rebellion many troubadours did not realize that a number of the Albegensian tenets (i. e. the denials of Christ, the Virgin Mary, baptism, and transubstantiation) were nothing but absolute heresy.<sup>4</sup> Innocent III organized a massive crusade which marched against the knights and noblemen with the same vigor and singleness of purpose that had the Crusaders centuries earlier as they marched against the Oriental infidels. Both sides prepared armies, and a terrible conflict ensued.<sup>5</sup>

Almost from the beginning the Church army proved to be the stronger. Because of the danger that one heretic might escape unrecognized, the crusaders

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 295.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 296.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 301.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

mercilessly murdered every inhabitant of the towns they captured. They did not consider this unjust because they reasoned that God knew who the Christians were and would give them their reward all the sooner as the result of their untimely deaths.<sup>1</sup>

Historical records are full of horrible accounts of inhuman slaughter and torture dealt by the hand of the Church. Provence, which had once been the seat of the culture and refinement of the French nobility, lay in ruin.

### Secular Polyphony

The secular polyphony of the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries was characterized by supreme complexity of both style and notation. It was the product of a select group of master musicians whose music was intended for the ears of courtly, culturally refined men and women.<sup>2</sup>

Although the Gothic spirit was an essentially French innovation, it was in Italy that several of the main forms of fourteenth-century secular polyphony originated. These, however, were all based on non-Italian sources. There was extensive use of the melismatic style of melodic writing that had been a distinguishing element in the organum of the St. Martial School. In general, the Italians' melismatic writing was more florid than that of the French. In contrast with the French bent toward the use of a liturgical tenor, the Italians

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 307.

<sup>2</sup>Willi Apel, French Secular Music of the Late Fourteenth Century (Cambridge, Mass.: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1950), p. 18.

Example 1. --Ja nuns hons pris (Ballade)<sup>1</sup>

a. Ja nuns hons pris (Ballade)

Richard Coeur-de-Lion (1157-1199)

1. Ja nun hons pris ne di-ra sa rai-son A-droi-te-ment, se do-lan-te-ment non. 3. Hon-te i a-vront, se por ma re-an-  
 2. Mais par ef-fort puet il fai-re chan-çon, Mout ai a-mis, mais po-vre sunt li don.  
 8 con Sui ça deus y-vers pris.

Indeed, no captive can tell his story  
 Properly, unless it be sadly.

But with an effort, he can make a song.  
 I have many friends, but poor are their gifts.

They will be put to shame, if for ransom  
 I am held here for two winters.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Archibald T. Davison and Willi Apel, Historical Anthology of Music, Vol. I: Oriental, Medieval and Renaissance Music, Rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 241.



Example 2. --Kalenda maya (Estampie)<sup>1</sup>

d. Kalenda maya (Estampie)

Raimbault de Vaqueiras (d. 1207)

1. Ra-len-da ma-ya Ni fuelhs de fa-ya Ni chanz d'au-zelh Ni flors de gla-ya 3. Del vo-stre belh Cors  
2. Non es que'm pla-ya, Pros dom-na qua-ya, Tro qu'un y-snelh Mes-sa-tgier a-ya 4. Pla-zer no-velh Qua-  
quem re-tra-ya tra-ya 5. E ja-ya Em tra-ya Na vos dom-na ve-ra-ya.  
mors ma-ya tra-ya, 6. E cha-ya De pla-ya L'ge-les ans que'm n'e-stra-ya.

- (1) The first of May, neither leaf of beech nor song of bird  
nor flower of sword lily
- (2) Pleases me, lady noble and gay, until I receive a speedy  
messenger
- (3) From your fair self who will tell me
- (4) The new delight which love brings me,
- (5) And joy; and which draws me toward you, true lady.
- (6) And may he die of his wounds, the jealous one, before I  
take my leave.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 241. The estampie, a dance melody, was usually performed by instruments alone. Raimbault wrote these words to the melody which he heard two jongleurs from northern France play on their viols at the court of Montferrat.

Example 3. --Nu al 'erst (Bar)<sup>1</sup>

b. Nu al 'erst (Bar)

Walther von der Vogelweide (d. 1230)

1. Nu al-erst lebe ich mir wer-de Sit min sün-die ou-ge siht 3. Mirst ge-schehen des ich je bat:  
 2. Hie daz land und auch die er-de Den man vil der e-ren giht.  
 Ich bin kom-men an die stat Da got man-nisch-li-chen trat.

- (1) Now at last my life seems worth while  
 Now that my sinful eyes behold
- (2) Here the land and soil  
 Which men hold in such high honor.
- (3) I have attained that for which I so often prayed:  
 I have set foot on the spot  
 That God in human form has trod.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 242. The bar is the German counterpart of the French ballade. This famous Palestine Song probably was written around 1228.

Example 4. --Winder wie ist (Bar)<sup>1</sup>

Neithart von Reuenthal

d. Winder wie ist (Bar)

1. Win-der wie ist nu dein kraft Wor-den gar un-si-ge-haft Seyt der may-e sei-nen schafft Auff dir hatt zu-sto-chen.  
 2. Vor den wäl-den auff der plan Sieht man vol-kumen-li-chen stan Liech-te plümb-lein wol-ge-tan Der han ich ge-pro-chen.  
 3. Gar be-sun-der durch ein wunder sol-ches kun-der ich ver-nahm, Man und frau-en ir sultschawen in den aw-en o-ne scham,  
 Wie des lich-ten may-en schar Stet be-clait in pur-pur far. Jun-gen maidt das neh-met war, blei-bet un-ver-spro-chen.

- (1) Winter, how has your strength been brought low  
 Since May has struck you with his spear!
- (2) On the meadows before the woods one sees  
 standing in full splendor  
 Brilliant, beautiful flowers; of these I have plucked.
- (3) Through a miracle I heard quite plainly:  
 Men and women, you are all to look upon the meadows  
 And see how the shining host of May stands  
 clad in royal purple.  
 Young maids, take heed and do not plight your troth.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 242.

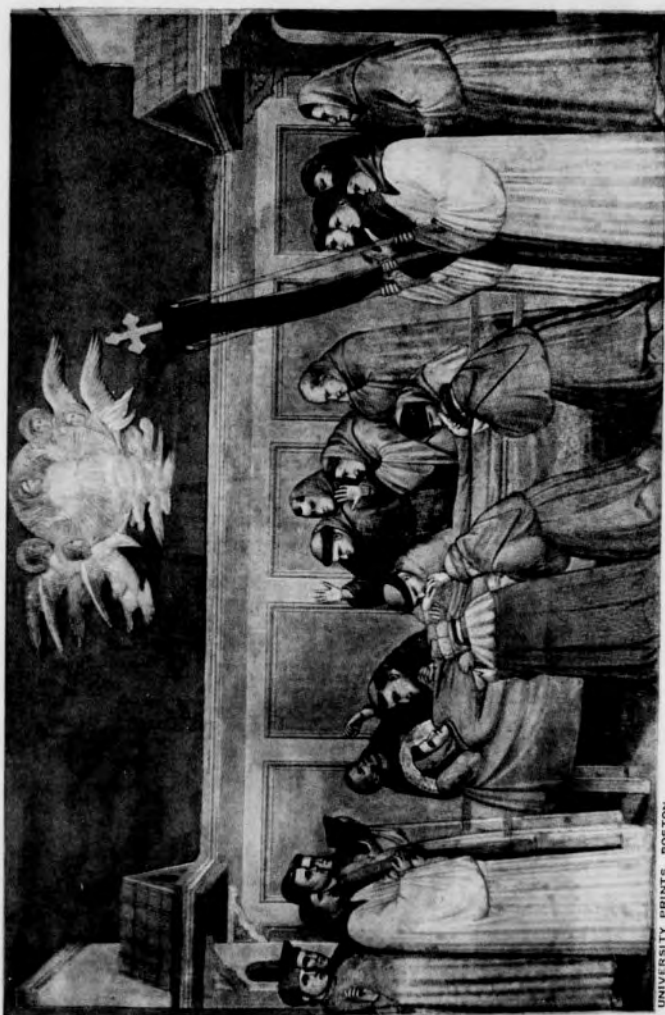
1041



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

ST. FRANCIS PREACHING TO THE BIRDS. FRESCO, c. 1300  
UPPER CHURCH, S. FRANCESCO, ASSISI

GIOTTO. c. 1266—1337  
FLORENTINE SCHOOL



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON  
 THE DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS  
 BARDI CHAPEL, S. CROCE, FLORENCE  
 GIOTTO, 1266?—1337  
 FLORENTINE SCHOOL



UNIVERSITY PRINTS, BOSTON

PAGE FROM BELLEVILLE BRIEVIARY (ILLUMINATED BY JEAN PUCELLE)  
 SAUL HURLING SPEAR AT DAVID (TOP); MURDER OF ABEL (BELOW)  
 BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE, PARIS

MANUSCRIPT. FRENCH GOTHIC. c. 1330—1335

*M. B. Codex.*

*Belle femme sage plus sage que son*  
*Le bon Dieu infirmement*  
*qui est tout seigneur*  
*Ence Belle femme*  
*Ora Belle femme*  
*Le recepuon et don ne force lence se vous supplie ma*  
*doutre d'amezelle. Belle femme c'est*  
*Il a tant de bonz amz qu'il n'a pas mon existence*  
*de se pas d'innu s'ice seule celle qui s'ame*  
*ahes que d'infum bonz appelle. fleur*  
*de beaux pas tousz excellence*  
*Belle femme...*

## PLATE XXXI

Facsimile from Chantilly Codex, c. 1400.



avored the use of a newly-composed tenor line. The French motet with its conglomerate texts and borrowed tenor did not appeal to the Italian ear.<sup>1</sup>

The madrigal, the ballata, and the caccia were the three main secular forms that originated in fourteenth-century Italy. The origin of the term madrigal has been traced to the Latin word metricale, "belonging to the womb"; thus the madrigal may have originally referred to a poem in the mother tongue.<sup>2</sup> The text was usually of a serious, expressive nature in contrast to the lighter verses that frequently characterized other types of fourteenth-century part-song.<sup>3</sup> The madrigal consisted of from one to four stanzas of three lines with each stanza sung to the same music.<sup>4</sup> At the end of every stanza was added a ritornello--a pair of lines set to different music in a contrasting meter.<sup>5</sup> The long melismatic passages usually found at the beginning and the end of each line of the text resemble the melodic style of the early conductus.<sup>6</sup> The majority of the extant madrigals contain two parts with a text for each, which

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<sup>1</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 361.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

<sup>3</sup>Leonard Ellinwood, "The Fourteenth Century in Italy" in Ars Nova and the Renaissance, 1300-1540, Vol. III of The New Oxford History of Music, ed. Dom Anselm Hughes and Gerald Abraham (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 52.

<sup>4</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 362.

<sup>5</sup>Donald Jay Grout, A History of Western Music (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1960), p. 122.

<sup>6</sup>Ellinwood, op. cit., p. 54.

indicates that there was no independent instrumental part used in performance. It has been speculated that most of trecento madrigals were probably written near the middle of the fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The trecento madrigal should not be confused with the completely different part-song of the same name which appeared in the sixteenth century.

The French in the early fourteenth century originated the chase (pronounced shahss), a lengthy canon with the voices following each other at the same pitch and in the same key.<sup>2</sup> The Italian caccia, which was very popular from 1345 to 1370,<sup>3</sup> was like the chase except for the addition of an instrumental pes in long note values which served as the supporting bass.<sup>4</sup> The caccia normally was composed of two sections: the first being in canon and the second (the ritornello) being either canonic, homophonic, monodic, or absent altogether.<sup>5</sup> The text of Francesco Landini's Così pensoso com' amor shows a quiet introduction, the vivid description of an outdoor scene, and a quiet ritornello:<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>3</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>4</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>5</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 365.

<sup>6</sup>Ellinwood, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

Thus, thoughtful, as love guides me  
 Along the green shore slowly,  
 I hear: 'Lift that rock!'

'Look at the crayfish, look! Look at the fish!  
 Catch him! Catch him!'  
 'This is marvellous!'  
 Isabella began screaming,  
 'Oh! oh!' 'What's the matter? What's the matter?'  
 'I've been bitten in the toe!'  
 'O Lisa, the fish is swimming away!'  
 'I've got him! I've got him!' 'Ermellina's caught him!'  
 'Hold on to him!' 'This is a fine fishing hole.'

Meanwhile I reached the troop of lovers  
 Where I found fair ladies and their swains  
 Who welcomed me with kindly looks.

Both the texts and the melodies of the caccia denote the naturalistic tendency that manifested itself in fourteenth-century art. Frequently the verses of the caccia contained details of hunting and fishing episodes or market scenes with rowdy bargaining and cries of street peddlers.

Such is the curious caccia of Master Zacharias of Florence.... A hunter suddenly finds himself in the noisy tangle of a market: 'Crabs, new crabs!--Give me crabs for two!--Let us first take the shells off!--I want five!--Ann, go peel them!--I don't want any!--Good lemons!--Are they really fresh?--How much?--A nickell!' At last a toothpuller recommends his services.<sup>1</sup>

The preceding caccia contains a technique that originated around the year 1300--hocket (hickup). This effect was achieved by interrupting the melody with the insertion of rests and having the missing notes supplied by another voice.<sup>2</sup> Frequently a small piece of melody would be tossed from one

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<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 104.

voice to another. Behind the hocket was the same impulse to dissolve solid masses that led the late Gothic architect to pierce the walls of his cathedral with windows and lace-like openwork.<sup>1</sup>

The ballata was the Italian version of the French virelai. It was composed of two sections separated by a full stop.<sup>2</sup> Frequently the latter section had both a first and a second ending, a practice seldom found in other forms of the period.<sup>3</sup> There are two outstanding differences between the construction of the ballata and the madrigal. The madrigal contained a long first section and a short ritornello, while the two sections of the ballata were of nearly equal length. In the madrigal the two sections were in different meters, but the ballata had no metric change.<sup>4</sup> It was not unusual for one or two parts of the ballata to be without a text--probably an indication that these lines were intended for instrumental performance. The ballata usually had a rich rhythmic texture with frequent syncopation and mixing of triplets with two-beat groups.<sup>5</sup>

More than one-third of the extant trecento secular polyphonic compositions may be attributed to the Italian Francesco Landini (1325-1397). Although stricken with blindness in childhood, Landini became a skilled performer of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>Ellinwood, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>4</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 367.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 369.

several instruments, particularly the portative organ. As the result of his superior attainments as a poet, he was awarded the laurel crown by Peter the Great of Cyprus.<sup>1</sup>

The rondeau, which was written in either two, three, or four parts, retained its thirteenth-century pattern. By the fourteenth century it had probably ceased to function as dance music, for its musical content had become quite sophisticated.<sup>2</sup> Guillaume de Machaut, the great French trecento poet-composer, wrote an ingenious rondeau with the following text.<sup>3</sup>

My end is my beginning, and my beginning my end, and  
this holds ever true. My third song thrice must retrace  
its course, and thus ends.

Although this was a three-part song, the tenor (the middle voice) was the only part with the notes and text written. The highest voice played backwards the same notes that the tenor sang. The third voice, the contratenor, played its line until it reached the middle of the piece, whereupon the notes that had just been played were played backwards.<sup>4</sup>

The rota was a round or canon with the voices entering in succession with the same melody. The most famous rota, the English Sumer is icumen in, dates from around 1310. A four-part canon written over a two-part pes

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 372.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 349.

<sup>3</sup>Ferguson, op. cit., p. 94.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

(tenor), it is the oldest known six-part composition.<sup>1</sup> (See Example 5.)

The rondellus resembled the rota in the fact that identical material was sung by all the voices. The voices, however, began together instead of entering one after the other.<sup>2</sup>

a	b	c	d	e	f
b	c	a	e	f	d
c	a	b	f	d	e

The estampida or estampie was one of the earliest known types of medieval instrumental music. These were tunes which the jongleurs played on their vieles to the stamping of dancers.<sup>3</sup>

Philippe de Vitri (1291-1361), a composer, theorist, poet, and diplomat, was one of the chief French musicians of the fourteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Although very few of his works survive, he may be credited with using a more lyrical style of melodic writing and freeing the melody from its almost slavish adherence to modal rhythms.<sup>5</sup>

The development of music in medieval Germany was slower than in France and Italy. Oswald von Wolkenstein (c. 1377-1445), although he was born approximately in the year of Machaut's death, was a contemporary of

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<sup>1</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 396.

<sup>2</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>3</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 218.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 336.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 337.



Example 5. Sumer is icumen in: Harold Gleason, *Examples of Music Before 1400*. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1942), p. 45.

*Sumer is icumen in*

*Rota: English School (London, Brit. Mus. Harl. 9718)*

C 1310

Four equal voices

Date revised by Bukofzer

Original text { Sumer is a -- com -- ing in, Loudly sing cuc-koo,  
Su -- mer is i -- cum -- en in, Lhu-de sing cuc-cu,  
Per -- spl -- ce Chris-ti -- co -- la que dig-na -- ti -- o,

Grow -- eth seed, and blow -- eth mead, And springeth woods a -- new.  
Grow -- eth seed, and blow -- eth mead, And springeth the wo -- de -- nu.  
Ce -- li -- cus a -- gri -- co -- la pro vi -- tis vi -- ci -- o

Sing cuc -- -- -- koo, Ewe now bleat -- eth as -- -- ler lamb, Lowth  
Sing cuc -- -- -- cu, A -- -- we ble -- eth as -- -- ler lomb, Lhouth  
Fi -- -- -- li -- -- -- o, Non par-cens ex-po -- su-it Mor-

as -- -- ler calf the cow; Bul -- lock start -- eth, buck now ver -- leth,  
as -- -- ler cal -- ve cu; Bul -- loc ster -- leth, buck -- e ver -- leth,  
tis ex -- i -- ci -- o. Qui cap-ti -- vas se -- mi -- vi -- vas

Mer -- ry sing cu-koo, Cuc -- -- -- koo, cuc -- -- -- koo,  
Mu -- rie sing cuc-cu. Cuc -- -- -- cu, cuc -- -- -- cu,  
a sup-ple -- ci -- o Vi -- -- -- te do -- -- -- nat,

Well sing-est thou cuc -- -- -- koo, Nor cease thou ne -- ver now.  
Wel sin-ges thu cuc -- -- -- cu, He swik thu na -- ver nu.  
et se-cum co-ro -- -- -- nat in ce -- li so -- li -- o.

The 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> voices begin when the preceding voice reaches the *ex*.  
The piece concludes when the 1<sup>st</sup> voice has sung the melody through once.

Per. Two equal voices

Sing cuc -- -- -- koo, now Sing cuc -- -- -- koo now.  
Sing cuc -- -- -- cu, nu Sing cuc -- -- -- cu

Repeat the Per until the 1<sup>st</sup> voice has sung the melody through once.



Machaut as far as musical attainment in Germany was concerned.<sup>1</sup> Wolkenstein travelled to Italy and was one of the first Germans to show traces of the Italian influence in his style.<sup>2</sup>

In England developed a concept in polyphony that was completely foreign to the part-singing of France and Italy. This polyphony was characterized by parallel successions of imperfect consonances. Although this practice began either at the end of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth, it was not until the fifteenth century that it was called by the name gymel from cantus gemellus meaning twin song. Gymel probably originated in the style of the popular music of the day and spread from that into the music of the Church.<sup>4</sup> The sacred music in which gymel was used came to be known as English discant. Triads were produced when the Gregorian melody was accompanied by parallel sixths and thirds above it.<sup>5</sup>

John Dunstable (c. 1370-1453), who wrote both sacred and secular music, was also an astronomer and mathematician.<sup>6</sup> The most distinguished

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 378.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 379.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 388.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 389.

<sup>5</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 84.

<sup>6</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 212.

English composer of the period,<sup>1</sup> he frequently employed the characteristic progressions of thirds and sixths.

Some of the trecento music reflects the influence of the architectural manner of thinking that was prevalent during the later Middle Ages. In the structure of a piece of music was seen the same mathematical precision that guided the architect as he counterbalanced the outward thrust of the vault by placing flying buttresses against the outside walls of a cathedral. In the crab canon the second voice read the melody of the first voice backwards. The page on which a mirror canon was printed was turned upside-down so that the notes were read not only backwards but also inverted. Other compositions provided for one voice part to have the same notes as another, but stretched out into larger note values or compressed into smaller ones. In some cases the same notes were sung by each of the four voices, but in different rhythms. Frequently the clue to the correct way of performing certain compositions was given obscurely in the words of the text: "Suddenly they turned their backs on me." "I am undone unless you redo me."<sup>2</sup> Both of the preceding statements apply to crab canons. Such tricks and disguises were not meant to be funny, nor do they indicate a fascination with surface superficialities. Rather they reflect the Gothic tendency to give a secret meaning to works of art and to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 411.

<sup>2</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 97.

withhold the solution from all but those able to discern it for themselves.<sup>1</sup>

The musicians and audiences of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries placed far less emphasis on the vertical aspect of music than do people today. If consonant sounds occurred at the proper points, the ear could tolerate almost any amount of dissonance between them.<sup>2</sup> It was sufficient in three-part writing to have the triplum consonant with either of the other two parts on strong beats. A consonant relationship between all three parts was not considered necessary.<sup>3</sup>

The existence of several different versions of a particular work may indicate that parts were added or omitted at the will of the performers. It is interesting to note that although drones were used to a great extent in medieval music, there were no parts written for them.<sup>4</sup> The number of parts in a composition was not necessarily constant with the number of performers, for a voice part might have been performed by a singer and an instrumentalist in unison.<sup>5</sup> Some pieces have instrumental preludes, and occasionally interludes are found in the midst of vocal lines. In all probability the singer himself had

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>4</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 353.

<sup>5</sup>Apel, French Secular Music of the Late Fourteenth Century, p. 14.

an instrument ready to use for such passages.<sup>1</sup>

Although secular polyphony was an extremely young art in comparison to the older, well-established arts which had been nurtured by the Church throughout the first millennium of Christianity, it had reached during the fourteenth century a degree of popularity and maturity which forces the present-day scholar to recognize it as one of the most significant art forms of the time. The many musical forms which came as a direct outgrowth of this music bespeak the extreme importance which this music had not only for its own time, but for the centuries to follow as well.

#### Sacred Monody

As Western Europe absorbed Eastern influences in the fields of art, architecture, and philosophy, so did she draw from the East in forming her own rich heritage of sacred music. The chanting of the Jewish Synagogue had a vital influence on the music of the early Church, for the first Christian congregations grew up within the Synagogue. The chanting of the psalms in the Roman Church reveals many similarities to the intonations of the Jewish cantor.<sup>2</sup> Likewise the Hellenistic influence was felt, since Greek was the predominate language of the Western Church for the first three centuries after Christ and still remains even today as a part of the liturgy in the Kyrie eleison.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore in the early

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 895.

centuries after Christ the nationalistic influences of converted pagans from Persia, Asia Minor, Egypt, Palestine, and other areas were absorbed. This assimilation was possible because the musical styles of these various peoples were closely akin to one another.<sup>1</sup>

The music of the early Christian Church passed from one stage to the next, paralleling in its evolution the development of architecture. During the first seven centuries of the Christian era, Eastern monodic chants were intoned in churches constructed according to the architectural designs common to the ornate, domed, Byzantine style. The mystic simplicity of the Gregorian chant was heard in churches of the dark, masculine, Romanesque style. With the thirteenth-century development of polyphonic music came the vigorous burst of energy in the magnificent Gothic cathedrals.<sup>2</sup>

Under the guidance of Pope Gregory a reform in sacred music was instituted in the seventh century.<sup>3</sup> The repertoire was standardized, and undesirable elements that had crept into the liturgy were eliminated. Gregory was not a composer, as is frequently assumed, but was rather a reformer of the chant. Gregorian chant gradually became the accepted liturgy of all churches in Western Europe and is still retained by most of the Roman Church today.

Although musical instruments were used to a certain degree in the

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<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>Durant, op. cit., p. 895.

<sup>3</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 120.

services of the early Church, it is impossible to be certain of the role they played in this music prior to the Gregorian reform of the seventh century. St. Jerome (c. 300-420) and others frowned upon the use of instruments in the service of worship because of the close connection between instrumental music and pagan celebrations.<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine (354-430) considered instruments to have symbolic religious meanings.<sup>2</sup> It is not always possible to tell whether an instrument cited in an ancient document is mentioned merely as a mystic symbol or as an actual source of sound.<sup>3</sup>

Gregorian chant or plainsong was written in eight ecclesiastical modes rather than in the major and minor scales in common use today. This was quite natural, because the melodies from the Eastern Mediterranean areas that influenced the plainsong were also modal.<sup>4</sup>

The various ecclesiastical modes derived their names from the older Greek modes; however, in the process of translation from Greek into Latin an error was made which resulted in a complete misunderstanding of the Greek modal system. The resulting terminology was accepted into common use even after the original error was discovered. The church modes are: dorian, phrygian, lydian, and mixolydian. Each mode encompasses the range

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>4</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 46.



of an octave with a particular arrangement of five whole steps and two half steps. Each of these may be illustrated on a piano by playing a white-key scale beginning and ending with the tone corresponding to the finalis or tonic of the mode.

The modes as described above are the so-called authentic modes. For each such authentic mode there is also a plagal mode which uses the same finalis, the only difference between an authentic mode and its plagal mode being the range of the two modes and the different confinalis for each.

#### Notation of Gregorian Chant

The system of notation in use today makes possible the accurate indication of pitch as well as the relative rhythmic value of a tone through the use of a single symbol; however, in the first millennium there was no comparable vehicle for the writing of music. The development of pitch notation can be traced back to the early Greek treatises on music in which can be found frequent references to the system of letter notation which indicated relative pitch accurately. This method, however, was not immediately incorporated in the notation of early plainsong, probably due to the fact that its typically Greek precision did not seem appropriate for notating the exuberant, almost Oriental melodies of the early Christians.<sup>1</sup>

It was from the grammatical accents used in Greek speech recitation in

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<sup>1</sup>Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music, p. 494.

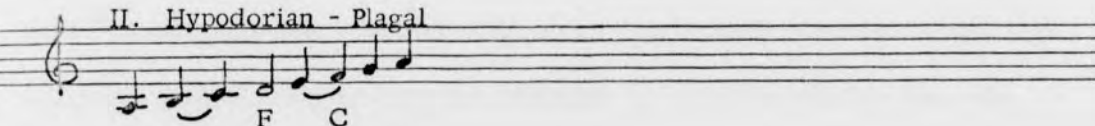


Example 5b. ECCLESIASTICAL MODES<sup>1</sup>

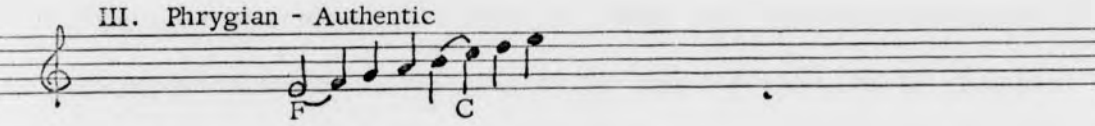
I. Dorian - Authentic



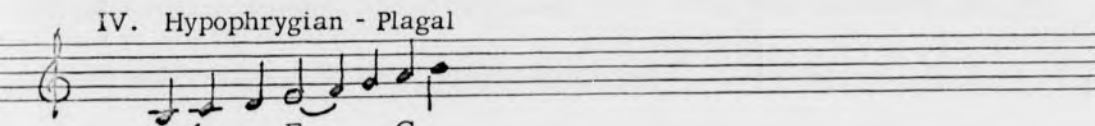
II. Hypodorian - Plagal



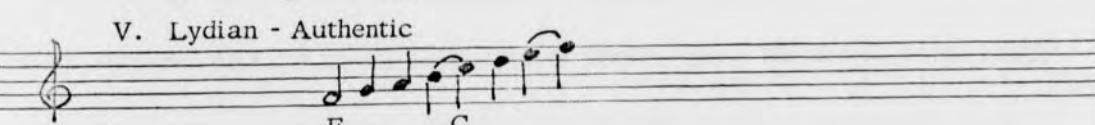
III. Phrygian - Authentic




IV. Hypophrygian - Plagal



V. Lydian - Authentic



VI. Hypolydian - Plagal




Key:

F - finalis

C - cofinalis

curved line - half step

VII. Mixolydian - Authentic



VIII. Hypomixolydian - Plagal



<sup>1</sup>For further information on the medieval modal system see Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 18, and Sachs, Our Musical Heritage, p. 47.

the second century B. C. that modern notation grew. Around the year 500 A. D. the accents developed into symbols that were capable of indicating a vague outline of the movement of the melody. These neumes, as they were called, did not constitute a fully developed system of notation and failed to give a clear indication of actual intervals.<sup>1</sup> For example, the neume which indicated a melodic skip upward was incapable of indicating whether that skip were the interval of a second, a third, or a fifth, etc. Apparently the neumes were intended to serve as a reminder for the singer who had already committed the melodies to memory or for the leader of the choir who interpreted melodic motion to the singers by use of hand movements.<sup>2</sup>

In the ninth and tenth centuries an attempt was made to indicate relative pitch through the use of Latin letters written above the words of the text.<sup>3</sup> This is related to the Greek system of letter notation cited previously. The combined use of letters and neumes was a product of eleventh-century experimentation.<sup>4</sup> With the letters written between the text and the neumes, the actual size of each melodic interval was clarified.<sup>5</sup>

Another early attempt to show the exact relation between the pitch of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 448.

<sup>3</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 134.

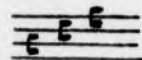
<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

one tone and the next was in the use of heightened neumes. The neumes were placed above the words of the text, and their height was supposed to be in proportion to the rise and fall of the intervals of the melody.<sup>1</sup> In the eleventh century the heightened neumes were placed on a staff of anywhere from one to four lines.<sup>2</sup>

The first use of horizontal lines to indicate pitch was recorded in the ninth-century treatise Musica enchiriadis. In this instance only the spaces between the lines were used, and the syllables of the text were placed in their appropriate spaces.<sup>3</sup> Although the use of a one or a two-line staff (a red line for f and a yellow line for c<sup>1</sup>) had appeared in earlier manuscripts, the first use of the staff in the sense in which it is known today is attributed to Guido of Arezzo (c. 1000). Guido advocated the use of three (f a c<sup>1</sup>) or four (d f a c<sup>1</sup>) lines.<sup>4</sup> Modern plainsong continues to utilize a staff of only four lines. Another of Guido's innovations was the placing of the letters "F" and "C" on their appropriate lines. From these letters, called claves, evolved today's clef signs.<sup>5</sup>

The "C" clef may be found on either of the top three lines



<sup>1</sup>Ferguson, op. cit., p. 110.

<sup>2</sup>Apel, Harvard Dictionary of Music, p. 448.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 708.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 709.

<sup>5</sup>Ferguson, op. cit., p. 114.

while the use of the "F" clef is generally confined to the third.



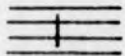
The placement of the clef enables melodies of various ranges to lie on the staff without the use of leger lines.<sup>1</sup> At the end of each line is found a custos to prepare the singer for the first note of the following line.<sup>2</sup>



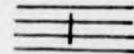
Bar lines in plainsong notation do not indicate the placement of strong beats or accents. They merely mark the division of sections of the prose text. Short, unimportant phrases are marked by one of the following notes (■ or ◆) or by a dotted note (■• or ◆•) followed by a quarter



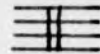
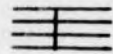
or a half bar.



No breath should be taken here because this indicates a rhythmic subdivision rather than a break in the rhythm. The end of a section usually containing two or more short phrases is marked by a half bar.



A breath should be taken here, but the movement must not be interrupted. The end of an important division within the piece is marked by a full bar and here a pause should be made. The double bar occurs at the end of a piece and is used to indicate a change of choir in pieces normally sung by alternating choirs. A star in the text marks the end of the Intonation and the entry of the choir.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup>The Liber Usualis (Tournai: Desclee & Cie., 1956), p. xvij.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. xvij.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. xxv.

## The Mass

The Mass received its name from the traditional words of dismissal spoken by the priest at the close of the service--Ite, missa est.<sup>1</sup> Mass may be celebrated at any time from dawn until noon with High Mass occurring usually between the hours of nine a.m. and noon. In the High Mass everything is sung or chanted except the scripture readings and the sermon, if there is one.<sup>2</sup> The Mass itself is divided into two parts: the Ordinary, which uses the same text every Sunday, and the Proper, which uses texts determined by the season or day.<sup>3</sup>

The Church year is divided into five major seasons:

Advent - November 30 through January 1  
 Epiphany - January 6 through February 24  
 Lent - beginning with Ash Wednesday (forty days before Easter) and ending with Holy Week (the final week before Easter Day)  
 Easter (Paschal Season) - Easter Day and the five Sundays following  
 Trinity - from the end of the Paschal Season until Advent.

The following five chants constitute the Ordinary; all remaining chants are classified in the Proper:

### 1. Kyrie Eleison (Greek text)<sup>4</sup>

Lord, have mercy upon us (three times)

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<sup>1</sup>Adrian Fortescue, "Mass, Liturgy of the," The Catholic Encyclopedia, IX (1907-12), 791.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 798.

<sup>3</sup>Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Adrian Fortescue, "Kyrie Eleison," The Catholic Encyclopedia, VII, 715.

Christ, have mercy upon us (three times)  
 Lord, have mercy upon us (three times)

2. Gloria (the Greater Doxology)<sup>1</sup>

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

3. Credo<sup>2</sup>

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and born of the father before all ages. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God. Begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. And was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary and was made man; was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, who together with the Father and the Son is to be adored and glorified, who spake by the Prophets. And one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup>Adrian Fortescue, "Gloria in Excelsis Deo," The Catholic Encyclopedia, VI, 583.

<sup>2</sup>J. Wilhelm, "Nicene and Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed," The Catholic Encyclopedia, XI, 49.



4. Sanctus and Benedictus<sup>1</sup>

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, Heaven and earth are full of the Glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

5. Agnus Dei<sup>2</sup>

Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.  
Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

The following is an outline of the principal portions of the Mass as they occur in the service:<sup>3</sup>

Aspergus me - Cleanse me, O God  
Introit - usually a Psalm verse  
Kyrie eleison - a part of the Ordinary  
Gloria - a part of the Ordinary  
Oratio - prayers  
Lectio - Epistle  
Gradual - Psalm verse  
Alleluia - verse ending with "Alleluia"  
Gospel  
Sermon - if there is one  
Credo - a part of the Ordinary  
Hymns - if there are any  
Offertory  
Secreta - secret prayers said by the priest  
Prefatio - more prayers of the season  
Sanctus and Benedictus - a part of the Ordinary  
Canon - trans-substantiation takes place here  
Elevation of the Host  
Agnus Dei - a part of the Ordinary  
(congregation receives communion here)  
Communio - prayers said as communion is received  
Ite, Missa Est

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<sup>1</sup>Adrian Fortescue, "Sanctus," The Catholic Encyclopedia, XIII, 432-33.

<sup>2</sup>H. T. Henry, "Agnus Dei," The Catholic Encyclopedia, I, 221.

<sup>3</sup>Adrian Fortescue, "Mass, Liturgy of the," The Catholic Encyclopedia, IX,



Gregorian melodies as used in the Mass may be found written in either of three different melodic styles:<sup>1</sup>

1. Syllabic style, in which the melody is very simple with one note for each syllable of the text. At times two notes or three at the most may be found on a single syllable.<sup>2</sup> (See Example 6.)
2. Neumatic style, in which some of the syllables will have only one note, but most will have ligatures or groups of two or three notes.<sup>3</sup> (See Example 7.)
3. Melismatic or florid style, in which many notes are sung on each syllable.<sup>4</sup> (See Example 8.)

The development of the trope is generally considered to be the most important phase of the evolution of Christian Chant from the ninth to the twelfth centuries. In the eighth and ninth centuries it became the custom to add a melismatic passage on the final vowel of the Alleluia and of other chants of a joyous nature. Singers who experienced difficulty in remembering these elaborate passages found that memorization was easier if a text were added with

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<sup>1</sup>The three musical examples which follow are all taken from The Liber Usualis which contains chants for both the Mass and the offices for the entire Church year.

<sup>2</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 164.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

Example 6.<sup>1</sup>

XII. c.

-gnus Dé-i, \* qui tóllis peccá-ta mún-di : mi-se-ré-re  
 nó-bis. Agnus Dé-i, \* qui tóllis peccá-ta mún-di : mi-se-ré-  
 re nó-bis. Agnus Dé-i, \* qui tóllis peccá-ta mún-di : dó-na  
 nó-bis pá-cem.

A - gnus De - i, \* qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di;  
 mi - se - re - re no - bis. A - gnus De - i, \*  
 qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di: mi - se - re - re no - bis.  
 A - gnus De - i, \* qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di  
 do - na no - bis pa - cem.

<sup>1</sup>The Liber Usualis (Tournai: Desclee & Cie., 1956), p. 63.

Example 7.<sup>1</sup>

1. *N. XI, C.*

-gnus Dé- i \* qui tóllis peccá-ta mún-di : mi-se-  
ré- re nó- bis. Agnus Dé- i, \* qui tóllis peccáta mún-di :  
mi-se-ré-re nó-bis. Agnus Dé- i, \* qui tóllis peccá-ta  
mún-di : dó-na nó-bis pá- cem.

A-gnus De-i, \* Qui tol-lis pe-ca-ta  
mun-di: mi-se-re-re no-bis. A-gnus De-i, \*  
Qui tol-lis pec-ca-ta mun-di: mi-se-re-re  
no-bis. A-gnus De-i, \* Qui tol-lis  
pec-ca-ta mun-di: do-na no-bis pa-cem.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

Example 8.<sup>1</sup>

S. XIII. c.

**K** Yri-e \* e- lé-i-son. *ijj.* Chri-

ste c- lé-i-son. *ijj.* Ky-ri-e \* e-

lé-i-son. *ijj.*

Ky-ri-e \* e- le-i-son.

Chri- ste e- le-i-son.

Ky-ri-e e- le-i-son.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

a syllable given to each note.<sup>1</sup> This was called troping. The sequence was the kind of trope found on the final vowel of the Alleluia.<sup>2</sup> The practice of adding a text grew until tropes were sung to new melodies that were inserted into the Mass.<sup>3</sup> Although they were attached to it, tropes never became a part of the official liturgy.<sup>4</sup> Troping became so widespread that the Council of Trent condemned the practice in the sixteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Today no tropes are permitted in the services of the Roman Church; however, five select sequences remain in the liturgy.<sup>6</sup>

The modern ear, accustomed to the complexities of twentieth-century harmony, is prone to consider plain chant as monotonous and boring. The listener, however, must realize that the purpose of the chant was to move the soul rather than merely to please the ear. The impact of this music can best be felt when the listener understands the cultural and religious forces that shaped the character of the chant.

Upon entering a Romanesque cathedral of the tenth or eleventh century, the worshipper was meant to be transported from the world of things to the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 187.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 186.

<sup>5</sup>Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 22.

<sup>6</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 50.

world of the spirit. There was nothing allowed in the dark interior that could divert man's mind from the fact that he was in the presence of God. It is natural that the music heard in these surroundings would be void of all secular emotional characteristics. In the triumph of the spirit over the physical world, music was intentionally deprived of all secular qualities or other manifestations which might evoke a physical or an emotional response in the worshipper. The use of certain harmonies or combinations of notes, sudden changes between loud and soft, a rapid tempo, a strongly syncopated rhythm, the use of the extreme high and low portions of the vocal range, large skips between notes in the melodic line, the sound of a voice with vibrato--all of these were intentionally avoided in Gregorian chant.

Traditionally plainsong is performed by an unaccompanied choir of male voices, although sometimes boys' unchanged voices are used. The melodies are of a limited range, seldom exceeding the compass of a ninth. Stepwise motion is used as the basic melodic interval, and large skips are rare. The chants are sung freely at a slow, relaxed tempo, and the rhythm follows the natural impulse of the spoken word. The stark simplicity and the uncomplicated nature of the chant give it a sense of dignity and power unlike that of other music.

### Sacred Polyphony

Although polyphony is an essential part of the music of Western Europe, it did not originate there. The earliest recorded examples of music in more



than one part can be found in the basically monophonic music of early Asian peoples which contained examples of two-voice canons, the use of a drone bass, and series of parallel thirds, fourths, and fifths.<sup>1</sup> Although polyphony in Eastern music was incidental, in the music of the West it was to become a vital element.

It is impossible to know when polyphonic music was first sung in Western Europe; however, as early as the time of St. Augustine (354-430) writers mentioned what might have been part-singing. The Musica enchiriadis, an anonymous manuscript from c. 850, is the earliest extant account giving definite rules for the composition of early two-part music which was known as organum (to organize). Strict or parallel organum was written during the ninth and tenth centuries. The accepted harmonic intervals that might occur between notes of the two vocal lines were the fourth and the fifth, which were termed consonances. Later, organum in parallel thirds was written in England. Parallel motion generally was used in the middle of a phrase with some oblique and/or contrary motion occurring at the beginning and the end. The seconds and thirds resulting from oblique movement were thought of as passing tones (a type of dissonance) and anticipated the free organum that was to come in the eleventh century.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 44.



Ex. 9. --Parallel Organum (9th c.)  
Sequence, Rex caeli, Domine<sup>1</sup>

[Plainsong]



[Organal Voice]

1. Rex cae - li Do - mi - ne ma - ns un - di - so - ni,  
2. Ti - ta - nis ni - ti - di squa - li - di - que so - li.



3. Te hu - mi - les fa - mu - li mo - du - lis ve - ne - ran - do pi - is.  
4. Se ju - be - as fla - gi - tant va - ri - is li - be - ra - re ma - lis.  
(etc.)

The use of fourths, fifths, and octaves as the first consonances may have resulted from a practice found in the congregational responses in the Mass. The higher voices sang the chant melody where it was written while the lower voices sang the same melody at a lower pitch level that coincided with the natural range of their voices.<sup>2</sup>

In parallel organum all the voices moved in the same rhythm. The Gregorian melody in the top voice was called the vox principalis and in later years the tenor or cantus firmus. The lower vocal line was known as the vox organalis. Although early organum had only two vocal lines, the overall texture was frequently expanded in actual practice to get a fuller sound. The vox principalis was doubled an octave beneath itself, and the vox organalis was

<sup>1</sup>Carl Parrish and John F. Ohl, Masterpieces of Music Before 1750 (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1951), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 250.

doubled an octave above.<sup>1</sup>

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries a second type of organum arose--the so-called free style organum. In this music the intervals of the third and the major second were used more frequently, contrary motion was emphasized, and the occursus (cadence) became important. It was permissible for several notes in the vox organalis to occur for each note of the vox principalis. Occasionally the two voices crossed one another.<sup>2</sup> In the twelfth century the Gregorian melody dropped below the vox organalis to remain there for the duration of the Gothic period.<sup>3</sup> As parallel organum probably resulted from the desires of people with different ranges to sing at a comfortable pitch-level, free organum may well have resulted from the singers' unintentional varying of the melodic line while attempting to sing it in unison.<sup>4</sup> (See Example 10.)

In the early twelfth century at St. Martial in France appeared the third type of organum--the melismatic or sustained-tone style. The notes of the chant (the tenor) became longer, while the upper vox organalis grew more elaborate in its rhythmically free structure.<sup>5</sup> (See Example 11.)

Soon it became evident that some type of rhythmic organization was

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<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>4</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 258.

<sup>5</sup>Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 48.

Ex. 10. --Free Organum (12th c.)  
Trope, Agnus Dei<sup>1</sup>

Agnus Dei qui tol lis pec - ca - ta  
mun - di; qui  
pi - us es fa - ctus, pro - tho  
plau - sti sa - net ut a  
ctus: mi - se - re re no - bis.

needed for polyphonic music. From the earlier plainsong notation was developed the mensural system around 1225. Six rhythmic modes<sup>2</sup> based on three units were officially accepted:

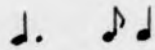
Mode 1 (trochaic)



Mode 2 (iambic)



Mode 3 (dactylic)



Mode 4 (anapestic)



Mode 5 (spondaic)



Mode 6 (tribrachic)



<sup>1</sup>Parrish and Ohl, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>2</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 78.

Ex. 11. --Melismatic Organum  
 School of St. Martial, Benedicamus Domino<sup>1</sup>



These, which followed the modes of classical verse, could change from time to time within a piece. It was even permissible for voices to use different modes at the same time.<sup>2</sup> Soon polyphony became more and more dominated by the strict patterns of the metrical modes. The thirteenth-century discant was a polyphonic form in which all voices were in measured rhythm.<sup>3</sup>

Among the earliest composers of polyphony were Leonin (c. 1150-1185)<sup>4</sup> and Perotin (c. 1160-1220)<sup>5</sup>, both of whom were connected with the

<sup>1</sup>Parrish and Ohl, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>2</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>3</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>4</sup>Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris.<sup>1</sup> It was under their guidance that the free rhythm of the St. Martial School was tempered by the added use of strict measured notation. This was one of the most important developments in music up to that time.<sup>2</sup>

Though much of Leonin's organum was in the rhythmically free melismatic style, he frequently inserted clausulae sections written in discant style in which the upper voice (the duplum) was cast more strictly in one of the rhythmic modes. Sometimes the long notes of the tenor would adhere to the strictness of the duplum by becoming slightly quicker.<sup>3</sup>

Perotin was called the optimus discantor (the greatest composer of discant). He continued the practice of alternating melismatic sections with those written in discant style. The main difference here was in the fact that his music tended to have more rhythmic precision than did Leonin's.<sup>4</sup>

One of Perotin's major contributions was in the writing of organum in three and four parts. The added parts were called the tripla and the quadrupla.<sup>5</sup> It is possible that in performance instruments may have doubled the

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<sup>1</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>2</sup>Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 81.

<sup>4</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>5</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 302.

voice parts in unison, but this is subject to speculation.<sup>1</sup>

It has been said that Perotin based the shape of his organum upon the nature of the chant on which it was built.<sup>2</sup> In this same manner the Gothic builder constructed his cathedral in the shape of the Cross. In both instances the basic sacred element was enlarged upon by the artist.

The conductus, first mentioned around 1140, was one of the main types of early thirteenth-century polyphony. Its name probably came from the conducting of the priests in processions.<sup>3</sup> It was written in either two, three, or four voices.<sup>4</sup> The distinguishing feature of the conductus was that all of the voices moved in almost the same rhythm giving a chordal effect contrasting with the rhythmic variety of organum.<sup>5</sup> Practically all polyphonic music prior to this had been based on a melody borrowed from the Gregorian repertoire. The conductus used as its tenor a Latin poem set to music.<sup>6</sup>

The motet, the most popular of the thirteenth-century types of polyphonic composition, originated around 1200. Between 1250 and 1300 it became more important than both organum and the conductus.<sup>7</sup> A writer at the turn

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<sup>1</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>3</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>4</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>5</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>6</sup>Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 53.

<sup>7</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 89.



of the fourteenth century spoke of the motet as

. . . a song composed of several parts, with several texts, in which two voices at a time are consonant with each other. This type of song, however, is not suitable for the common people, because they neither sense its subtleties nor are they delighted when listening to it. But it is fitting for the educated and for those who seek the refinements of the arts.<sup>1</sup>

The motet's two chief characteristics were its use of a borrowed melody for the tenor line and its varied texts in the remaining voices.<sup>2</sup> The tenor voice usually was a cantus firmus taken from the chant and was performed either instrumentally or vocally.<sup>3</sup> In the standard motet style of the late thirteenth century the upper counter melodies were sung to texts in Latin and/or French.<sup>4</sup> In reality the motet was not considered one composition but a group of two, three, or four independent pieces sung at the same time. Like the architecture of the period it was unified in spirit rather than in actual appearance or sound.

The thirteenth-century motet was a unique and typically Gothic combination of sacred and secular elements. The French texts for the upper voices dealt with various aspects of living. Frequently employed were the *trouvère* love poems and verses in praise of drink.<sup>5</sup> It was not unusual for the tenor to be a hymn to the Virgin while the upper voice was a French love

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<sup>1</sup>Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 311.

<sup>3</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>4</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>5</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 314.



song. This strange mixture was not profane according to naive Gothic reasoning, for the Virgin Mary was associated with all phases of life in the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> The motet has been compared with the Divine Comedy because both are composed of secular ideas bound together within a theological framework.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the textual variety of a motet, the voices also frequently moved at different tempos and in contrasting rhythms. The upper voice, called the triplum, was gay and lively while the middle voice, the motetus, was slightly slower. The tenor was the slowest of all, moving in a strict, rigid pattern.<sup>3</sup>

Thirteenth-century polyphony has been summarized in this manner to show the three chief styles of composition:

1. Conductus, having one text and one meter.
2. Organum, having one text and different meters.
3. Motet, having different texts and different meters.<sup>4</sup>

Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300-1377) has been called the most outstanding musician of the fourteenth century.<sup>5</sup> In addition to being a composer he was

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>2</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>4</sup>Sachs, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>5</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 347.

also active as a poet and served as canon of Rheims Cathedral.<sup>1</sup> Although he excelled in writing music in almost all of the current styles, his most important work is the Messe Notre-Dame. This composition is of great historical significance because it is the first known complete polyphonic setting of the Ordinary of the Mass written by one man.<sup>2</sup>

It is partly because of the emphasis on structure that Machaut's Mass gives an impersonal impression. It has the same air of lofty elegance that is expressed in the architecture of the High Gothic cathedrals.

Machaut's Mass is an excellent illustration of the use of isorhythm. This was really an elaboration of the thirteenth-century system of rhythmic modes, the only difference being that the isorhythmic formula was much longer and more complex. The repetition of the formula, called the talea, frequently was the only means of providing a long composition with a sense of unity. The repetition itself was so subtle that the listener could not easily be made aware of it.<sup>3</sup>

The entire melody was called the color, and usually it was repeated at least once within the composition. Sometimes the repetition of color and talea did not coincide, and as a result the melody was sung in a different rhythm the second time. This, like the repetition of isorhythm, was not easily apparent

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<sup>1</sup>Gleason, Music in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Reese, op. cit., p. 356.

<sup>3</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 110.

to the ear.<sup>1</sup>

It is generally believed that instruments were used both in playing interludes and in doubling the voices in music of this time. The exact instruments that were employed and the extent to which they were used cannot, however, be determined.<sup>2</sup> Machaut's Mass marked the peak of accomplishment as far as medieval sacred composition is concerned. Pope John XXII in 1324 denounced the use of such complicated music and spoke against compositions that required a display of vocal virtuosity on the part of the performers.<sup>3</sup> As the prestige of the Church declined in the fourteenth century, the arts began to look more and more to secular expression.

#### Musical Instruments

The musical instruments of Gothic Europe had surprisingly little in common with those of ancient Greece and Rome but were rather more related to the early instruments of the peoples of Asia.<sup>4</sup> Prior to and during the thirteenth century, the main accomplishment in terms of the development of instrumental music was in the importing of the instruments themselves from the Byzantine East. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries these instru-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 117.

<sup>4</sup>Karl Geiringer, Musical Instruments, trans. Bernard Miall (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 46.

ments were adapted to Western needs, many of them becoming completely devoid of their Asian characteristics in the process. During this time certain instruments grew in popularity and acceptance, while others were discarded.<sup>1</sup>

In the development of the musical instruments of the Middle Ages can clearly be seen an example of the emerging sense of individual expression that found its culmination in the Renaissance. The main channel of development in regard to musical instruments was toward the eventual free expression of the performer's personality. Whereas instrumental performance in the early Middle Ages had been a purely mechanical and cold process, the late Gothic era witnessed an emerging trend toward the display of individuality in music.<sup>2</sup>

The instruments, having tone qualities too weak to stand by themselves, were heard either in instrumental groups or were used to duplicate the voice parts in vocal music. The use of instruments for solo work and for vocal accompaniments came later.<sup>3</sup>

Instrumental ensembles of the period were composed of members of unlike tone quality. For example, rather than to have heard a consort of vielles or other stringed instruments (similar to today's string quartet), medieval man would more usually have heard an ensemble of a zither, a trumscheit, a lute, a trumpet, and an oboe, similar to the ensembles depicted in PLATES XXXII

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



## PLATE XXXII

Hans Memling, Altar of Najera, Museum in Antwerp (late 15th century), with zither, trumscheit, lute, trumpet, and oboe.

and XXXIII. The contrasting tone qualities of the various instruments made it possible to follow the individual contrapuntal lines of a composition. Harmony had not yet progressed to the point that polyphony was chordally or vertically conceived.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most picturesque of the medieval musical instruments was the oliphant, which was imported from the Byzantine Empire in the tenth century. (See PLATE XXIV.) In its original form it was fashioned from the ivory of an elephant's tusk. In Europe it was often made of gold, being highly ornate and quite valuable.<sup>2</sup> Tremendous importance was attached to the oliphant because of its symbolic nature rather than for its importance as a musical instrument. There is evidence of several incidents in England in which a man who was granted an office or a fief received from his leige-lord an oliphant rather than a document. There are more oliphants preserved to-day than any other musical instruments of the Gothic era. Although it enjoyed immense popularity during the early Middle Ages, it was no longer used after the fourteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Another instrument that came from Byzantium was the organ, which first appeared in Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries. Wind was supplied by bellows worked by either the hands or the feet. The first organs were

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

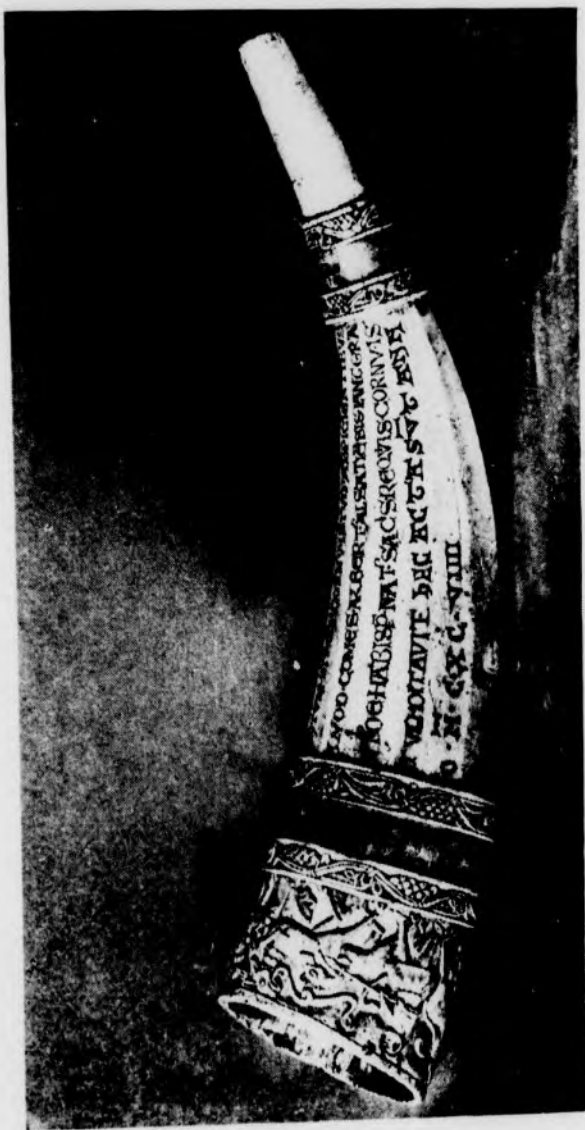
<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 51.



PLATE XXXIII

Hans Memling, Altar for Najera, Museum in Antwerp (late 15th century), with trumpets, portative, harp, and fiddle.





2. Oliphant from A.D. 1198(?). Vienna, Museum of Fine Arts

quite difficult to play because of the lack of a practical keyboard--the different pitches being obtained by pushing and pulling slides one at a time. Needless to say, the successful operation of this instrument required more than one person.<sup>1</sup>

The portative organ, which was used for secular purposes only, appeared in Europe in the twelfth century. The height of its popularity was reached three hundred years later, and during this time it was the most common wind instrument of the era.<sup>2</sup> It suffered a rapid decline in usage toward the end of the fifteenth century and virtually disappeared during the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The portative organ, which could be played by one man alone, was suspended from the neck of the player by a strap. The keyboard, at a right angle to the player's body, ran outward in such a way that it was accessible to the right hand. Bellows behind the organ were worked by the player's left hand. As a result of the keyboard's position, it was impossible to use all of the fingers of the right hand in playing a scale. Therefore the player could use only two fingers in scale passages. It has been speculated that this may have been the reason for the eighteenth-century keyboard players' use of only two fingers, although the position of the keyboard no longer made this necessary

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>Curt Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1940), p. 287.

on later more modern instruments.<sup>1</sup> Of the surviving pictures of such an organ, no two show the same instrument. The portative might have anywhere from six to thirty pipes arranged in one, two, or three ranks. Keyboards were of two types: those using press-buttons as opposed to those with levers.<sup>2</sup> Because each key could control only one pipe, the portative had no stops.<sup>3</sup>

The church organ, called the positive, was stationary rather than portable. The organ in Halberstadt Cathedral in Germany (installed in 1361) was the earliest instrument that is known definitely to have included the entire chromatic scale. Some organs prior to this had used only the chromatic tones B-flat, F-sharp, and C-sharp. The Halberstadt organ, which made use of both stops and mixtures, had three manuals and a pedalboard. A great amount of physical energy had to be exerted to control the great air pressure of the larger pipes. This was done more easily by the feet than by the hands, so pedals came into use.<sup>4</sup> So much air was required by this organ that it took twelve men to work the twenty-four bellows, which were operated in pairs by the feet.<sup>5</sup>

One of the earliest string instruments to appear in medieval Europe was the vielle or fiedel, which came to Europe from the Balkan Peninsula.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 286.

<sup>2</sup>Geiringer, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>3</sup>Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments, p. 287.

<sup>4</sup>Geiringer, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

The oldest existing record of such a string instrument played with a bow is seen in a ninth-century illustration from Charlemagne's court showing an instrument resting on the knee. Tenth-century records reveal a smaller instrument that rests on the shoulder.<sup>1</sup> The strings of the vielle were fastened to a tail-piece rather than directly to the body of the instrument. The pegs at the opposite end of the instrument were attached at right angles to the table of the instrument rather than parallel to it, as is the case with modern violins.<sup>2</sup>

From the tenth century to the twelfth, certain unmistakable changes were taking place in the Europeanization of the vielle. The twelfth century saw a clear distinction between the neck and the body of the instrument, so that the shape assumed was that of an ellipse rather than the pear shape of the earlier type. Sound holes, which previously had been semi-circular, became narrower and shaped nearly like a letter "C". Gradually the waist of the vielle became narrower. The former lack of indentation at the waist had forced the bow to be held in a position parallel to the instrument, causing a drone from the lower strings. The later innovation made it possible for one string to be played at a time.<sup>3</sup>

The lute, introduced to Europe by the Saracens, was first recorded in tenth-century Spain; however, it did not become important until three centuries

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

later. The lower ends of its strings were attached to a string holder which was glued to the table of the instrument. This provides a contrast with the tail-piece of the vielle. Another contrasting point is in the fact that the pegs were fastened parallel to the table of the lute, not at right angles, as was true with the vielle.<sup>1</sup> The three to five strings of the lute were rarely plucked with the bare fingers, but with a small rod instead. This demonstrates the importance of avoiding any direct influence by the performer upon the tone quality.<sup>2</sup> The rebec was the lute's bowed equivalent.<sup>3</sup>

The Saracens brought the psaltery into Europe in the twelfth century. Its large number of strings of varying length and pitch were arranged in front of a sounding board. The strings were plucked either with a quill or with the bare fingers.<sup>4</sup>

The harp, which had been fairly popular in Europe for several centuries, underwent no real transformation during the Middle Ages. As more strings were added, the size of the instrument grew to accommodate them.<sup>5</sup>

The hurdy-gurdy, sometimes called the organistrum or the symphonia, was described by Odo of Cluny in the tenth century, but the earliest surviving

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

picture dates from the twelfth century. A wooden wheel turned by a crank pressed on the strings, causing all of them to vibrate at once. The strings were shortened by means of wooden tangents operated by keys. The first forms of the hurdy-gurdy provided for simultaneous shortening of all three strings producing the effect of parallel fifths and octaves. Later forms of the instrument permitted the lowest string to vibrate freely as a drone. Often the hurdy-gurdy was worked by two players: one holding the instrument on his knee and turning the handle, and the other operating the keyboard which worked the tangents. The hurdy-gurdy provides an accurate representation of early medieval musical standards. All feeling on the part of the artist is excluded, and the melody is never sounded apart from the accompanying voices.<sup>1</sup> In the later Middle Ages the hurdy-gurdy decreased in size to the point that one man could play it. It was rapidly becoming the instrument of the peddler and the blind beggar.<sup>2</sup>

The strangest of all medieval stringed instruments was the tromba marina or the trumscheit. Both the origin and the history of this ungainly instrument are obscure, the first representation of the instrument being found in twelfth-century French sculpture. It was in the shape of a pyramid, narrow at the base, but very tall--from three to seven feet in length.<sup>3</sup> The instrument

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>3</sup>Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments, p. 290.



was held against the chest with the fingers of the left hand touching the strings very lightly to create harmonics, and the bow was held in the right hand. The longer of its two strings passed over a bridge, one foot of which was not attached to the table, but which rattled against the table as the string vibrated.<sup>1</sup> The name trumscheit, German for "drum log," reflects the rattling tone quality of the instrument.<sup>2</sup>

The origin of the name tromba marina has given rise to speculations as strange as the instrument itself. Concerning the first part of the name, the drumming bridge may have given the strings an almost brassy quality, and the harmonics of this instrument were the same as those of the trumpet scale. Theories concerning the latter part of the name are more unbelievable. Some scholars have reasoned that the tromba marina may have been used as a signal instrument at sea. This would appear to be somewhat ridiculous, for the listener would have experienced considerable difficulty in hearing the wheezy rattle from one side of the deck to the other.<sup>3</sup>

The trumpet was brought to Europe by the Saracens, its first traces being found in eleventh-century Italy.<sup>4</sup> Its long, cylindrical tube was not curved

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<sup>1</sup>Geiringer, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>2</sup>Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments, p. 290.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 291.

<sup>4</sup>Geiringer, op. cit., p. 60.



until the fifteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Gradually the trumpet came to be regarded as the most highly valued wind instrument of the late Middle Ages. It was used for signaling purposes only by knights and nobles. The common foot soldiers used a large metal horn, the tube of which was curved approximately a century before that of the trumpet.<sup>2</sup>

Trumpets were used in two sizes. The smaller one, no longer than a man's arm, was often made of wood and was particularly popular in Italy. The larger one, the busine, was a slender, straight tube with a banner suspended from it. Another related instrument, the slide trumpet, required that its mouthpiece be held with the left hand, leaving the right hand free to derive the various pitches by moving the body of the instrument up and down.<sup>3</sup>

The bagpipe appeared as far back as the ninth century, but it was without drones or chanters until the fourteenth century.<sup>4</sup> It was used mainly as a herdsman's instrument, which may account for its frequent use in Christmas music.<sup>5</sup>

Another instrument of the herdsman was the syrinx or the panpipes. Originally an instrument of the ancients, the panpipes consisted of various

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

sized vertical flutes with no finger holes which were bound together as one instrument.<sup>1</sup>

The shawm was a very primitive oboe utilizing a double reed and finger holes. The Saracens introduced it to Sicily in the twelfth century. The reed of the shawm was inserted all the way into the performer's mouth, after the manner of the East, so that the performer was not able to control the tone quality with his lips.<sup>2</sup> In the late Middle Ages the shawm developed in two sizes. The smaller, slender soprano shawm had a bell and seven finger holes. Its contralto counterpart, a fifth lower, was called the pommer or the bombard. Both of these instruments had an unusual feature. The lowest hole, for the little finger, was found on both sides of the barrel so that either hand could be placed on the bottom. The unused hole was then closed with wax.<sup>3</sup>

The recorder, which is currently experiencing a revival, looked like a simple wooden cylinder, but in reality had a conical bore reversed so that it tapered toward the lower end of the instrument. The recorder had seven finger holes with the lowest one duplicated like the shawm.<sup>4</sup>

The transverse flute was blown, as the syrinx, directly against the mouth-hole, with the resulting tone not being as mechanical as that of the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

recorder. This allowed the performer to vary the tone quality, and the tone itself was stronger and more alive. So the personal element, which had been a part of Eastern music long before the birth of Christ, was finally creeping into the music of Europe.<sup>1</sup> The transverse flute was held horizontally, as compared to the vertical position of the recorder. Its finger-holes numbered only six, since there was not one for the little finger. This flute was used principally as a military instrument and later came to be known as the fife.<sup>2</sup> From the end of the Crusades to the present day, particularly in Germany, the fife and drum have been the leading instruments of the infantry.<sup>3</sup>

The kettledrum, the tambourine, the triangle, and the cymbals were all in use in Europe before 1300.<sup>4</sup> Generally speaking, drums were not commonly used in Europe prior to the twelfth century. Usually the tone quality of these instruments was very shallow, since their use merely as a time-beating accompaniment did not require a powerful tone. Only in the fourteenth century did the drum become truly significant. In Germany the massive war drum began to appear, and loud drums were used in combination with the transverse flute.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>3</sup>Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments, p. 288.

<sup>4</sup>Geiringer, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>5</sup>Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments, p. 289.

With the exception of the great war drums and the kettledrums of the later Middle Ages, medieval instruments were ". . . delicate, weak in tone, and averse to any developments in the direction of increased loudness."<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately very few of the existing manuscripts dating from the Gothic period indicate whether a given part is instrumental or vocal, and for this reason it is impossible to give a complete and accurate account of the nature and the extent of instrumental usage in the performance of medieval polyphony. Perhaps composers did not feel that specific directions were needed and relied instead upon custom and tradition to determine the manner in which their music was to be performed. Pictorial and literary sources indicate that a small vocal and instrumental ensemble usually performed the polyphonic compositions of the fourteenth century--normally with one voice or one instrument on a part. Apparently performances varied according to the singers and players who were available.<sup>2</sup>

Effects of harmony were not sought after in that heyday of contrapuntal virtuosity, and the contrasting tones of the instruments gave full emphasis to the polyphonic life of the composition. The orchestra of the late Middle Ages was instinct with light, radiant, imponderable colors, like the paintings of the Primitives.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Geiringer, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>2</sup>Grout, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Geiringer, op. cit., p. 67.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

Assuming that the cultural life of the Gothic era is a proper and vital part of the secondary school curriculum for the reasons set forth in the preface to the present study, the material discussed in the preceding chapters might well be presented in an actual classroom situation in the following manner.

Prior to hearing any medieval music, the general music class must have an elementary grasp of the spirit of the Gothic era. It is likely that the role of the Church as the dominant social and political influence of the times will be stressed in early class discussions concerning the medieval environment. Therefore it is logical that Church architecture should be the first artistic expression introduced to the class. When introducing music which is almost totally unfamiliar to the class, it has been the experience of the present writer that best results frequently are obtained when the music is introduced in relation to one or more of the visual arts. Depending upon the receptiveness and the previous musical experiences of the students, the teacher may decide to go into the sculpture and the stained glass windows of the cathedrals in order that the students might be more deeply involved in the basic atmosphere of the Gothic era before hearing the music of the period.

With the setting of the Gothic cathedral clearly in mind, the students will be able to have a more profound appreciation for the purity of plainsong and early sacred polyphony. After an introduction to the Mass itself--the texts, the plainsong melodies, and early notation of these melodies--focus on the music of the period should temporarily cease in favor of an introduction to medieval painting. Although this is a course of study for the general music class, prolonged concentration on Gothic music may become tedious for the students unless the teacher is unusually adept at maintaining a high interest level.

Because of the close relationship between medieval painting and the Church, it would be a simple matter following the study of painting, to redirect the course work to the study of sacred music beginning with early organum. Examples 6, 7, and 8 were included because recordings of these are readily available,<sup>1</sup> and because they may be sung by the average general music class with a minimum of difficulty.

A more thorough discussion of the chivalric code and other social phenomena of the period should precede the study of the troubadour and his music. Examples 1, 2, 3, and 4 are representative of this type of secular song, and the relative simplicity of both rhythm and melody enable these songs to be sung by the average class. Early descants that were sung by the jongleurs provide excellent material for transition into the subject of secular polyphony.

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<sup>1</sup>Masterpieces of Music Before 1750, Vol. I: Gregorian Chant to the Sixteenth Century, H. S. 9038. Recorded by the Haydn Society, Inc., New York, in conjunction with W. W. Norton and Co.



In the foregoing outline, no mention has been made of the sequence in which much of the material concerning the general background of medieval culture and the more specific information concerning drama and literature should be presented in a typical general music class. These may be included at any point at which the teacher feels the study of these topics would be particularly relevant.

It has been the author's continuing experience that the study of Gothic man and his thoroughly exciting and vivid cultural life by students in all levels of the secondary school is not only a most worthwhile subject, but is as well one in which students can find themselves completely engrossed. One of the principal rewards for the student in such a study is the discovery that medieval man, with all his hopes, accomplishments, and frustrations, was after all a human being not so very unlike people of our own time.



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# APPENDIX

## SELECTED RECORDINGS

L'Anthologie Sonore, Vol. I: Gregorian Chant to the Sixteenth Century; Records 1, 2, and 3. L'Anthologie Sonore: AS-1, AS-2, and AS-3. [1954]

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The Central Middle Ages, Research Period II, Series A: Chansons and Motets of the Thirteenth Century, Series C: The School of Notre Dame: Two Organa. Archive Production: ARC 3051 (14068 APM). History of Music Division of the Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft. [1957]

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Perotinus, Viderunt Omnes -- Salvatoris Hodie. Concert Hall Society: CHS-  
1112.

Typed by  
Marie Teague